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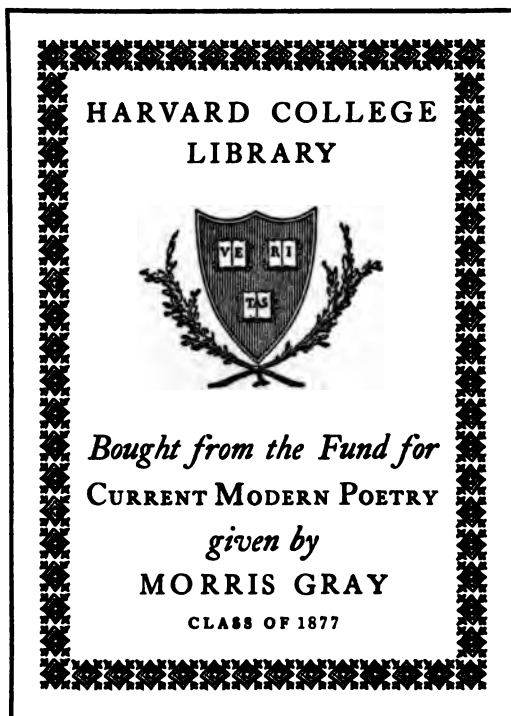
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ECHOES



CLIFFORD
HARRISON

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ECHOES.

“ Not only those
Who hold clear echoes of the voice divine
Are honourable, . . . but those who hear
Some fair faint echoes . . . they are blest.”

Writings by CLIFFORD HARRISON.

STRAY RECORDS; OR, PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NOTES. 6s. *2nd Edition.* Macmillan & Co.

IN HOURS OF LEISURE. (Verses.) 5s. *2nd Edition.* Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.

ON THE COMMON CHORDS. (Verses.) 4s. 6d. Innes & Co.

THE LUTE OF APOLLO. (An Essay on Music.) 5s. Innes & Co.

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READING AND READERS. 2s. 6d. Methuen & Co.

LINES IN PLEASANT PLACES. (Rondeux, with Illustrations by the Author.) *Subscription Edition.* Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.

Ameston

ECHOES. *1900*

BY
CLIFFORD HARRISON.

London:
HENRY J. GLAISHER,
57, WIGMORE STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE, W.

—
1900.

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MORRIS GRAY FUND

July 25, 1934

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ECHOES.

ECHOES.

ECHOES:—which give us back the thought we bring;—
Our voice in flight,—surprised upon the wing ;

Earth's faint reply which answers to our call,—
The passing hint which Nature grants withal
To tell us words are not ephemeral :—

The Phantom Promise of that sympathy
Between us and the Earth, for which we sigh,—

As if a friend had signalled from the hill :
“ I know ! I know ! ” and all again were still ;

As if from out the woods a beckoning hand
Waved back to us,—“ Yes, yes !—I understand ! ”—

A symbol of Life's tense vibrating chord,
Which has the note for each awakening word,

Recording our own thought, and that alone,
In answering cadence and with every tone,
But giving also something all its own.

Echoes : they are a transmutation fine
Whereby the word we speak becomes a sign

Of such a spacious hope and harmony
The heart goes forth to meet its prophecy.

For doth it not,—(for all who list to hear)—
Syllable on the whispering atmosphere

That there is unevolved Response which waits
For those who call it forth at Nature's gates?

Echoes :—strange word of injury and praise !
Of imitation, copy, paraphrase,
And sympathy's most sweet and perfect grace !

The blame may be accepted and absolved
If but the praise be in the word involved.

And as, when rowing o'er some mountain lake,
The boatman pauses for awhile to wake

The voices of the hills afar and near,—
" Listen ! " he says, " there is an echo here, "—

So he who scans these leaves with kindly eyes,
Nor seeks new chords nor native harmonies,

May recognise some far concordant thought,
In verse not elsewhere resonant in aught,—

May feel that his own spirit, calling clear,
Has found a not unwelcomed Echo here.

"THE DEAR OLD COUNTRY."

1900.

I.

ISLES of the North by the sea waves blest
With a quickening pulse of warmth from the West :
 Islands of song-birds, and shine and shower,
 Sweet as the breath of thy gorse in flower :—
Land of meadow and moor and hill,
Ah ! let our hearts, till those hearts are still,
 Pray : "God ! make thy pathway straight !
 Keep thee pure and inviolate—
 Dear Old Country !"

2.

Far to the South and far to the North,
Thy children, in nations, have now gone forth ;
 Far to the East and West they roam
 To 'stablish their laws and make their home.
Scattered they be, but one at heart,
Near in love, though far apart.
 All the world o'er rings out their song,
 Echoing homeward, clear and strong :
 "Dear Old Country !"

3.

Well have we loved thee in days of ease,
Crowned and cinctured with garlands of peace ;
 Well have we loved thee when, day by day,
 We saw thee tread thine imperial way.
And yet, if we truly loved thee thus,
When thou gav'st good hours and gifts to us,
 Shall we not love thee doubly now,
 When the hour of pain is dark on thy brow,
 Dear Old Country ?

4.

Do we not grieve with the hearts that yearn
For those who went forth but will never return ?
 Do we not weep as the cry goes on—
 " Oh, Absolom ! my son ! my son ! " ?
Yet there is hope in the sorrow yet :
And the sorrow is great that itself can forget,
 And cry, as it kneels at the Mother's knee,
 " I am proud of my dead, since they died for thee,
 Dear Old Country ! "

5.

And thou—the Lady the world reveres,
Crowned with thy crown of honoured years,—
 Shall we not say that this hour of gloom
 A statelier stature doth assume
In the thought of thee upon thy throne,
Who, ever in sorrow and tears of thine own,
Didst still, as Queen and Woman, feel
Thy first care was the woe and weal
 Of the Dear Old Country ?

6.

We, who but watch the crimson star
That blazes out on the front of war,
Fear not the issue which we abide.
Humbled may be our heart of pride,
But not of courage. Never yet
Our empire stood so firmly set
As this to-day when the Mother-Land
Sees all her children round her stand
For Dear Old Country !

7.

The wrongs of one are the wrongs of all :
Together we stand at the Mother's call.
This is the lesson, grand and stern,
The world from our hour of pain should learn.
Great is the lesson, if great the cost,
And great be the blame if the lesson be lost.
For thou shalt arise, with new heart of grace,
And a purer light on thy well-loved face,
Dear Old Country !

8.

The voices rise—the voices fall :
But one voice rings above them all ;
Never till now so plainly heard.
God grant that it give us our Conquering Word !
For Britain, Greater or but Great,
Will still stand whole, inviolate,
If from her hundred sons arise
The noblest of all battle-cries—
Words that bring tears to all our eyes—
"Dear Old Country !"

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Then we reached a little village ;
Hidden there it lay,
High amongst the snow-capped mountains,
Dreaming life away,

In its narrow round of labour ;
Feeling just a beat
From the great world's pulse, when, clattering
Through the little street,

Came the *diligence* at noontide ;
Or in summer time
Strangers stayed to sketch and ramble,
Mountaineers to climb.

Round the church whose campanile
Bright in sunlight shone,
Wide-roofed chalets seemed to cluster
As for benison.

Passing just beyond the village,
Nigh the church, we found,
Walled, and marked by many a cross,
The little burial-ground.

Then our post-boy raised his cap,—
Bowed a reverent head,—
Drew his horses to a standstill,—
Turned to us, and said,—

“ Here, I pray, we halt a minute :
Please bear with me, Sirs :
Buried yonder lies my comrade,
Dead now two long years !

“Never was there braver lad !
No post-boy in the place
Could wind a horn with such a skill,
Or ride with such a grace !

“Here I always stop a little,
Up or down the hill,
Just as 'twere to say to him,—
‘I remember still !’

“Give me pardon, whilst my greeting
I to him am giving,
For I like him to believe
That I believe him living !”

Then he blew upon his bugle :
Joyously it sounded !
All that silent Alpine valley
With its life resounded !

Hark ! the cadence took the hills,
A hundred echoes meeting !
Almost seemed his comrade's voice
Responded to his greeting.

Echo gave the sound to echo,
Through the mountains ringing :
Then he lifted up his voice,
Strong and manful, singing,—

“Listen ! I remember you,
Because the day is bright !
Listen ! I remember you
Because my heart is light !

"O, my comrade! hear me calling!
Thus I give you greeting.
You are not forgotten, dear!
This is to the meeting!"

"You, who made my life the brighter,
Take the love I'm giving:
By the love I give you still,
Still I know you're living!"

Then he cracked his whip,—hey heya!
Till the bright air tingled.
Up again,—and off we go!
Loud the horse-bells jingled!

Farther on, and farther always,
Down the hill-side swinging;
Still the echoes of that cadence
In my heart kept ringing.

Then we entered the ravine,
Deeper, deeper going:
Were the echoes in my heart?
Or horns of Elf-land blowing?

Far-off crag, and sunlit glacier,
Water-fall hard by,
Cadenced both in sound and silence
That wild melody.

All the magic of the mountains
Woke beneath its spell,
Filling us with hopes and feelings
Speech could **never** tell.

So the day passed into evening.
Under golden skies
"The lovely land of Italy"
Opened to our eyes.

But through sunshine and through sunset
Still that tune kept beating :
Till—to memories of mine own,—
I, too, sang my greeting :—

"Listen ! I remember you,
Because the day is bright !
Listen ! I remember you,
Because my heart is light !

"Listen, dear ones ! Hear me thinking !
Thus I give you greeting.
You are not forgotten—never !
This is to the meeting !"

.

Years a many now have vanished,
Since that pleasant Maytime.
Days are busy : life is passing :
Dusk is shadowing daytime.

But I often see a picture
Of that radiant day,
And those sunlit mountain-passes
Where we held our way ;

Often hear the tramp and jingle—
Hear and see quite plain !
Then the sudden pause and silence
As the boy draws rein.

Yes : I think I like his notion,
Greeting thus his friend,
With a love that knew no shadow,—
A joy death could not end.

Such the memory I would wish for !
Not the sense of gloom,—
Tears and mourning,—flowers that wither
On a stone-cold tomb !

Give me sunshine, warmth, and singing,—
Friends upon their way,—
Memory which makes life the brighter
Both in work and play !

To be thought of in the sunshine !
To be wished for when they're glad !
This to me were worth a hundred
Memories that are sad.

I would say to those who love me,—
“ Do not mourn for me.
Clean forget : or, else, remember
When 'tis well with thee.

“ Let remembrance sing, and, singing,
Smile, her own tears scorning :
Let her sing as sang that post-boy
On that bright May morning,

“ When his bugle set the echoes
Through the mountains ringing,
Whilst the thoughts in us gave answer,
Echoing back his singing.

“ Yes : from Life's great highway calling
As we pass along,
Out across Death's field of silence
Let us send our song :—

“ Listen ! We remember you,
Because the day is bright !
Listen ! We remember you,
Because our hearts are light !

“ Gone before, but unforgotten,
Thus we give you greeting !
Was the Parting made in sorrow ?
Joy shall crown the Meeting !

“ You who made our lives the brighter,
Take the Love we're giving !
By the Love we give you still,
Still we *know* you're living ! ”

THE CABALA.

Ah! they were strong, those men of Ancient Years,—
Initiates of the Holy Mysteries,—
Who handed on, from hand to hand, the Keys.
They pass before us,—Elders, Rabbis, Seers,—
Whilst farther still in the dim past appears
A vision of Celestial Hierarchies.

Were these thy great transmitters? Where are they
Who be their followers? Are they to this hour
A secret Band? Can'st thou the student dower
With Knowledge truer than all Science? Say,—
Do any scan thy sphinx-like face to-day
In hope to drag from thee the Word of Power?

Great is thy silence even as thy speech :
In thine unveiling, great thy secrecy!
Only for those who have the eyes to see
Thou openest the Path. The Rabbis teach
With finger on the lip. They give to each
And every word its hidden treasury.

Thy pages shine with characters of flame.
Magic is on thy threshold. White or Black ?
Divine, inverted, grows demoniac !
Ah ! that dark Shadow falls athwart thy Name.
Is not the Path at first one and the same
For Mage and Sorcerer ? The heart draws back !

And let the timid pass not through thy Gate !
Fear must be conquered, or prove conqueror.
Yet Dangers of the Pathway close the Door
But to the faint of heart. No Quest is great
That is not fraught with good and evil Fate.
He must be bold who treads the Starry Floor.

The Shadow even passes as we look,
Leaving thy Name the brighter. Through thy page
We trace the Thought that led Chaldea's Sage ;—
Inspired the Vedas ;—in old Egypt took
Strange forms occult, making the stone its Book ;—
The fair Immortals of the Golden Age

Gave unto Greece ;—glorified far Cathay ;—
And still shows record in the Druid stone :—
The Thought that guided those, who, all alone,
In Age of Darkness saw the Secret Ray,
The Light within ; who found the Perfect Way,
And made the Life Regenerate their own :

The Thought that through the Ages still is One ;
Whose Letter kills, whose Spirit maketh free !
For as, with many tides, in many a sea,
It is One Ocean the all-seeing Sun
Beholds on earth :—so Mystic Truth is One,
Whate'er the symbols and the forms may be.

The novice, entering at this veiled Door,
Stands for the moment mazed. His dazzled sight
Sees but a darkness lit with flashing light.
His ears but hear a far-off rush and roar
Of Wings and Wheels revolving evermore
In the Abysses of the Primal Night.

The Secret Word is spoken : and behold !
The world is changed. The bolts and bars draw back.
The Dark takes fire. And where in mystery black
Hope saw no answering sign, there is unrolled
A scripted hieroglyph—a belt of gold—
The Spirit's star-imprinted Zodiac.

The Letter yields anew and still anew
Bright spheres of Thought, vast as the Cosmos vast ;
And, whilst upon the Universe is cast
A Countenance Divine, there comes in view
A Form, like mist with sunlight shining through,
A vision of the Eternal Protoplast.

The Master-Builders find their Canon here.
The members of the Archetypal Man
Give them their measures. By this secret Plan
Did the great architects Earth's Temples rear.
And for that Art which rules the Unseen sphere
And builds its Houses,—thou art Guardian.

High in the unimaginable gloom
O'er which is thrown the bridge thy Wisdom
frames,
In that Ellipse which holds the Ten great Names
On Pillars through whose symbolisms loom
Angels and demons,—worlds of Hope and Doom,—
The glory of the dread Sephiroth flames.

Who knows what all thine anagrams may mean?
Who dare to sweep aside thy skein perplexed
To rest in deeper tangles of the text?
Thy Mysteries seem to look at us between
The written words, as doth the Great Unseen
Through all we see. Thy splendour has reflexed

Minds that have led mankind. Thy Numerals
Evolved the calculations Newton made.
Bacon's deep-seated wisdom thine assayed.
But to our Wise to-day a New Voice calls;
Our Science builds out mystery with stone walls;
And some are scornful of thee,—some, afraid.

Who guards thy Secrets? None. They're safe with thee.

More baffled by the Key than by the Door
The Key unlocks, most minds reject thy lore,
As stumbling-block and folly. Let them be.
And some, more wise, may solve Life's mystery
In truth of living which needs nothing more.

Who lives his life, and keeps his converse true ;
Who loves because he loves to love, and heeds
Of no rewards or recompensing deeds ;
Who does the duty that comes first to do ;
Whose words are kindly and whose needs are few ;
True to his own, nor fighting other creeds ;

Masters a Cabala which leads him on
As truly, by as luminous a way,
As his of old, whom, the traditions say,
First penned the Symbol, Tetragrammaton ;
Who taught Temura and Notariqon
And knew the mysteries of Gamatria.

SIR DEBONNAIR.

THE noonday hour lay bright and still
On the terraced slope of the castle hill.

The castle climbed from steep to steep,
With turret and tower to the donjon-keep.

The chiselled rock seemed wrought into one
With rock-like buttress and bastion.

A terraced garden, with marble stairs,
Led down the hill with smooth *parterres*.

The slopes were gay with fruit-tree and flower,
With fountain and grove and trellised bower.

On the second terrace, beneath some trees,
With an open missal upon her knees,
Sat the fair young maid, Queen Rosalys.

The apple-blossoms, against the blue,
Lit with the sunlight shining through,

Seemed not more pure, and not more sweet,
Than the flower-like maid from face to feet.

The pages she turned were quaintly scrolled
In verditer, crimson, azure and gold,
With angel faces, aureoled,

With birds and blossoms and rainbowed wings ;
But she saw and heeded none of these things.

At length she laid the book aside,
And gazed o'er the country far and wide.

Hers was the land for many a mile,
And it seemed to answer her smile with a smile.

Fruitful and rich as land could be
Was the wide demesne she held in fee,
And ruled with ancient sovereignty.

Orphaned whilst yet in childhood's years,
Her life since then had known no tears.

Nineteen years as a princess should
She had prayed each day for her people's good.

And now her councillors, grave and sage,
With heed for the throne and its heritage,

Had urged her to give her maiden hand
To one who might share her crown and land.

Suitors came fast : but on none she smiled :
And her heart had been as the heart of a child.



They were, one and all, too humble of mien :
'Twas less of the Bride they wooed than the Queen.

None claimed her yet with that demand
Which love doth give to voice and hand.

" I dream of one who cometh as king,
Who kneels, but, kneeling, seems to bring

" A gift that monarchs may well hold great.
He shall be King of my life and fate :
And till he comes," she said, " I wait."

Yet over her face this bright May day,
As she gazed at the mountains far away,

There was something of question,—dim surmise ;—
The coming of joy or of sacrifice ?

Her Lady in waiting sat hard by,
At work on some silken broidery.

And, working, she sang the old love-tune—
" Love comes too late, or it comes too soon ;

" Or it comes but to flit away again :
Ah, Love ! Thy ways are as sunshine and rain !"

The Queen looked gaily round : " Pardie !
Nay : surely not as the rain," quoth she.

" 'Tis a sunshine ever : " The lady sighed :
" You do not know, dear ! " she replied.

"I think that it often comes as the rain."
"And I," said a voice in mocking strain,
"That it always comes, if at all, as Pain."

The ladies smiled, but did not move.
Then the elder turned to the terrace above,—

"Sir Debonnair," she cried, "be still!
Flee and jibe at all else, as you will,

"But leave Love alone. We had forgot
Your presence, good Fool, and need it not."

"Nay," said the Queen, "come hither, Sir,
And be our rhyme's interpreter."

The jester limped down the terrace stair:
His shadow came on before him there:
Men had named him in jest, *Sir Debonnair*.

A cruel name for such a man!
But what would you have? Since the world began

Seldom, I wot, a jest may be
That hath not some touch of cruelty.

Cruelly near is satire to spite:
And the wit that stings is the surest of flight.

Sir Debonnair stood before the Queen
In his jester's motley of yellow and green,

With his large sad eyes and mask-like face,
In pose grotesque and assumed grimace,

Hunch-backed, misshapen, halting of knee,—
A proof of Nature's irony.

For sometimes indeed man's humour plays
With a tender thought or a dainty phrase :
But the jests of Nature are cruel always.

"Sir Debonnair," said the smiling Queen,
"Confess! Make shrift! What did'st thou mean

"By saying Love always comes as Pain?
The song sings of sunshine, it sings of rain,

"Of Love on the wing the rhyme doth prate,
Of coming too soon, and coming too late,

"But thou—Oh, Solomon!—by thy strain
Love never comes at all save as Pain.

"A weighty charge! Come, make it good."
A shadow fell where the jester stood.

He lifted his eyes. A cloud sailed by.
He paused a moment as if for reply,
And then, with the mockery of a sigh,

He said, "I spake as a fool, you see!
Fools always speak with certainty.

" Folly, indeed, my mission is :
And our mission is often our Nemesis.

" And Love is folly, folk say, at the best.
And so they hold within whose breast
Dan Cupid is welcomed oftenest.

" How should I know? What have I to do
With Loving or Love?" She answered, " True!

" For thee, the cap and bells, Sir Fool!
No scholar thou for Love's fair school!"

" I were of Fools the chiefest and first
If I for such knowledge grew ever athirst.

" 'Twas for thy merriment, oh! my Queen,
That you bade me tell what my words might mean.

" Meaning? I never mean aught I say.
That is Folly's—and Wisdom's—wisest way.

" Madam, to ask me the ways of Love,
Or the forms it takes, or the end thereof,

" Sure were to ask from Folly a lie!
No: ask some foolisher Fool than I."

The Queen laughed low: " Well said!" quoth she.
" I thank thee, Fool, for thine honesty!"

He limped from the Presence, louting low;
He shrank from her laugh as a child from a blow.

The Queen sat long on the terraced hillside,
Gazing over the valley wide.

Often her lady looked at her
As one who would fain be a questioner.

But something there was in the young Queen's face
Which held her mute. The sun's noon rays

Recorded an hour on the dial hard by,
And the Queen still mused on silently.

How oft had she said that within her heart
This Love which they sang of, held no part?

'Twas true, 'twas true, in very sooth!
No man in his prime, nor beardless youth,

Nor belted earl, nor squire, nor knight,
Had yet found favour in her sight.

And now—even now—it was not Sight
Had put the heart-ease of yore to flight.

Not Sight! In truth she still could say
She had never looked on a man whose sway
Could hold her thoughts for a single day.

Not Sight. What then? Can Hearing move
A listener's heart to the thought of Love?

It well may be. For Hearing and Sight
Were one, if we saw and heard aright.

For many nights her listening ears
Had heard a voice. And joy and tears,

A new sense of life, and all life made new,
Had been her heart's response thereto.

The singer had sung, and her spirit had stirred
As if some far-off call it heard.

He sang of Joy and the Morning Sky :
And under the gladness she heard him sigh.

He sang of Glory and Noble Deed :
And through the pæan she felt him plead.

He sang of Sorrow and Days of Dole :
And deep in the shadow she faced his soul.

A Voice in the night ! That—that alone !
A Song!—But the Voice and the Song seemed her own.

Whence came the minstrel ? What his degree ?
Noble, surely. The singer must be
As his song. "What then ?" mused the Queen. "To me

"They both are dreams : and I dream too long.
I love and I dread both Singer and Song."

She rose. "'Tis late. Let us go," she said.
And she passed up the terrace with stately tread.

But that same night when the night was late
The Queen alone at her casement sate.

Not a breath was astir. No gleam of light ;
Only o'er head the stars shone bright.

A silvery chime rang out. From below,
Came the drip of the fountain's overflow.

A nightingale every now and again
Thrilled the night with a passionate strain.

The Queen sat waiting,—listening. Hark !
The sound of a lute came up through the dark.

The few soft chords she knew so well
Vibrated on the air. Their spell

Was like some secret Magic Word
Which the inner spirit knew and heard.

Then came the Voice from the garden beneath
In its song of a life that knows no death.

And moved by the exaltation blent
With the music's passionate wild lament,
Her thoughts through the Song to the Singer went.

The Woman's Heart within her did wake :
And she longed for life lived for someone's sake.

Down through the darkness she stretched her hand
And murmured softly,—“ I understand ! ”

The words scarce rose above her breath,—
“ Thou art my love for life or death ! ”

.

On a golden dais was set the throne,
And the Queen, as a Queen, did sit thereon.

Crowned with the diadem, flashing bright,
She was Queen of Beauty and Queen by right.

The dames of the Court were gathered near,
With barons and councillors grave and austere.

There were tabarded heralds and pages gay,
And men-at-arms in glittering array.

The halls were thronged with the great of the land,
Noble knights and ladies grand :

All wore their panoply of state,
And their banners waved at the castle gate.

A fanfare of trumpets gave signal loud :
And silence held th' expectant crowd.

The Queen stood up. She turned her head
To those about the throne, and said,

" Councillors, reverent, grave and sage,
Ye have said my years have reached the age,
When, heedful of throne and heritage,

" For the good of my people and this dear land,
I should wed,—if wisdom guide my hand.

" And have answered that it is Love,
And Love alone, such guide should prove.

"Else were the hand made desecrate,
And evil would hap to it and the State.

But now I stand before you here
To make confession, without fear.

"I have found that Love which the heart should obey,
And the hand would take it for guide to-day.

"For many a night I have heard a Song,
And the Voice is of one who is true and strong.

"Such a song could only come from one
Whose life can face the light of the sun :

"Who is brave of heart, and pure in thought ;
And such is the man that my heart has sought.

"Therefore I summoned and speak to you here,
And make confession without fear.

"And, therefore, I now my choice proclaim :—
Let the singer stand forth and own his name."

Silence fell on the wondering throng :
But where was the singer who sang the song ?

"Let him stand forth !" she cried, "for I wait."
The air grew dumb with impending Fate.

"I wait," she cried, "my King to see !
Who was the man who sang to me ?"

Silence still. Answerer none.
The tension of wonder held everyone.

A flush spread over the young Queen's cheek.
The silence waited for Fate to speak.

Then, out of the crowd about the throne,
The jester rushed, and, standing alone,

He shouted in voice that was fierce and strong,
"I was the Singer, and mine was the Song!"

The Queen drew back with anger and scorn :
So graceless a jest was not to be borne !

Her ladies gathered about her there :
A wrathful clamour rent the air.

The sting of an insult seemed to fall
Like a whip which lashed them one and all.

"Liar and Fool! He shall die! He shall die!"
Till at last there rose one dominant cry—
"Sing! Sing us your Song, and prove the lie!"

Sir Debonnair heard the challenge : turned,
And faced them all. A mad light burned

In his eyes. He cried, "I accept the test!"
And he laughed aloud as one possessed.

At the foot of the throne he took his stand :
He raised his harp, and with strenuous hand

He swept the chords till he made them ring.
Then he lifted his voice, his last song to sing.

He sang of the World that is free to the soul
When the ivory Gates of Romance unroll.—

Of the Love that makes the dullest life grand,
And changes our earth into Fairyland,—

Sight to the blind!—Wings to the lame!—
Magic more bright than of crystal or flame!—

The Flower that blooms amid blight and frost
To tell this world of the Eden it lost!

He sang of the light that within a man moves
When his heart is lit by the Woman he loves:

Of the Word of Power the woman doth hold,
The life of the man she loves to mould;

The Inspiration, as from heaven,
Which unto those who love is given.

He sang of the heritage of woe,
The birthright of shame, which some lives know:

Of the cruel prison the Body can be
When the Soul cries out for its liberty:

Of the doom that is borne—Ah, God!—how long!
When the longing is sore and the dungeon is strong.

And oh! to break it, and flee away
For another chance in another day,

In another world where the Gods are kind,
And Fate is not deaf and dumb and blind!—

Another world, where Love shall be all,
And Love will answer when Love doth call :—

Where the Soul and the Thought make the Form
and the Face,
And no Hope is too great to find Hour of Grace :—

And all in our lives which is best and most bright,
Shall claim us, and be us, and rise into sight,
And burst into blossom in God's great Light !

He ceased : and through all that crowded place
There was breathless silence for a space,
As the jester gazed in the lady's face.

Then, springing, lightning swift, up the throne,
He stood there, defiant, triumphant,—alone :—
And crying, " A king may claim his own ! "

He seized the Queen's white hands in his,
He pressed on them passionate kiss on kiss.

From a hundred scabbards the swords flashed forth,
The whole hall rang with a shout of wrath.

They rushed at the jester : he stood at bay :
The Queen waved the coming swords away.

She gazed at the man as one who dreamed :
Mastered by some strong spell she seemed.

Sir Debonnair threw aside his harp ;
He drew his dagger, bright and sharp :—

"Do not fear me!" he cried, "my Love is true.
'Tis my soul is your knight, and it kneels to you.

"It would not offer you scathe or taint,—
Lady-love,—Maiden,—Queen,—and Saint!

"I go to stand at the Shadowy Gate,
There for thy coming to watch and wait:

"Wait for you,—if so I may,—
Till you, too, tread the Silent Way.

"Then you will know me. Myself you will see,
Freed from this prison which bars me from thee.

"I shall speak to you then, as face to face,
Unmarred by this brutish body's disgrace.

"Then I shall claim you with unrefused claim!
And we shall be one in the Great New Name.

"You have passed your word: you shall not be
forsworn:
And yet shall be freed from its shame and scorn.

"I pay the price. I save you from Wrong,
And leave you, Memory—Hope—and the Song."

The dagger flashed:—a cry—a groan!
The jester lay dead at the foot of the throne.

The Queen looked up. "Let the wedding bells ring!
Sceptre and mantle hither bring.
Kneel at his feet! I have found my King."

THE STATUE.

A VAST cathedral : here, a man of stone,
 Above the long triforium, I stand.
 I look to eastward, down the long dark nave,
 To where the altar rises 'mid the apse—
 Banners, and tapers, incense, flowers and gold.
 Beneath me stretch the aisles on either side.
 And where the transept cuts across the nave,
 The lantern-tower springs up beyond the roof.
 My niche is carven, stool, and canopy,—
 Acorns and oak-leaves, butterflies and birds,
 And one small squirrel nibbling at a nut.
 I always loved an oak the best of trees.
 Certes 'tis very strange I should be here ;
 Strange—and yet natural enough, in truth.
 Most things seem natural when they come to pass.
 I wonder how I look up here alone.
 I take it no one knows me now I'm stone,
 I scarcely know myself, or what I was.
 'Tis evident I died some time ago ;
 And now am turned to stone, and set aloft.
 I never dreamed that such would be my end :
 The ends we work for oft surprise ourselves.
 But why this niche, and carven canopy ?

And why set up aloft, above the crowd ?
I do not think that I can be a saint :
I' the flesh I never was a saint, God knows !
I was as safe a sinner as the best.
But now I'm stone ; so I shall sin no more :
For sinning goes against the grain of stone :
Although itself have had experience
Of every temperature from ice to flame.
But that was *Æons* since. 'Tis past, 'tis gone,—
As life for me,—a story that is told !
There are advantages in being stone :
Passionless, cold, immoveable and grand,
You feel a level and profound content,
With just a wholesome touch of self-esteem.

'Tis rare to see the sunset and the dawn
Stealing athwart the walls, and o'er the roof.
'Tis rare to feel the sunshine warm my feet,
What time, like rainbows in the misty air,
The gorgeous colours from the painted glass
Swim all across the dark and solemn glooms.
Sometimes they make me glow from head to foot—
Ruby and amber, emerald and blue !
S. Matthew yonder, with the saffron robe,
In winter time is first to take the dawn.
And when upon that alabaster tomb
A sunbeam from the high clerestory falls,
I know that summer holds the outside world.
If I were man, with weak and dizzying brain,
I dare say I should sicken at this height.
I never liked to look from any height,

Saving indeed that figurative point
Of altitude we call Prosperity.
But now I like the void beneath my feet ;
The solitude of this pre-eminence,
With its attendant sense of possible fall.
And most my lofty station pleases me
When dusk begins to work its mysteries,
And that dim world which mortals call Unseen,
Grows perilously near our line of sight.
Ah ! could I tell the things that I have seen,
The things that I have heard, when all is dark,
And bolt and bar make fast the cloister-door,
The tale, though ne'er so calmly told, would thrill
Hearts stonier than stone itself. Yet, nay !
'Twould not be so. The tale were nothing new.
My lips are sealed. I'm stone.

I love the dark.

I do not fear it, though I watch it rise
As though it came up from the vaults beneath ;
For darkness rises, 'tis the light that falls.
It deepens to a Hades, whilst my niche
Still holds a ghost-of daylight from the West.
Far at the Altar shines the crimson lamp ;
I see the tapers glimmering round the Shrines ;
And then, through windows where the glass is clear,
And piety has not yet made the light
Take up its parable for Holy Church,
I watch the gathering darkness find the stars.
Sometimes the wreaths of incense, rising high,
Will spread about the roof in silver haze,

And come between me and the world beneath
Like summer clouds about a mountain gorge.
The air is always heavy with the scent,
Balsamic—full of comfortable warmth,—
A tonic and a sedative at once.
The only thing that really gives me pain
Is that strange shuddering sound that shakes the air
When the great organ mutters low and deep.
It shakes the very niche in which I stand :
It shakes my very inmost heart of stone :
And makes me think of what I use to feel,
Of what I used to do, when I was flesh :— ,
Of what those people feel who kneel in crowds
Far down beneath me—poor unsettled souls !
And for the moment I remember all—
Ambition—Love—and Grief—and all the rest.
And then it passes. I am stone once more.

But yesterday I saw a man below,
Who beat his hands together on his breast,
And sank upon his knees, and hid his face.
And then I thought, why, I was like that once !
But now I'm stone, thank heaven ; and here, no
doubt,
I stand till Doomsday and the great White Throne,
Seeing the changing skies above my head,
And underneath my feet, the changing crowds.
I may outlive a dozen human lives.
The worst iconoclast would find it hard
To pull me from a perch as high as this.
No hands will touch me save the hand of Time.

I feel that I inherit centuries ;
I never knew the pride of life till now.
Listen ! the Priest is chanting in the apse.
Now from the choir comes a sweet response :
That is the swinging of the thurible :
There goes the silvery incense-smoke aloft,
A phantom spiral climbing up the air.
Bells chime : and now with diapason-notes,
The organ takes the calm and reverent air.
Once I remember at a time like this
I wept and felt that I must cry aloud !
O God, have mercy !—I remember all !
Ah ! how I loved her ! and she was so fair !
And shall I weep no more ? Nay, but I will !
Now, whilst the organ touches me with life—
Now, whilst the music gives me memory—
I'll cry for help. Help, Friends ! I live—I live !
I am not stone ! I'm coming down to you !
I move—I fall—God help me !—
So—I wake.

GETHSEMANE.

FAIR was that Garden of the Lord,
Now guarded by the Flaming Sword,—
 The Eden of the Mystic Tree :
But other Garden Christ did win,
Where flames no sworded seraphin,
And all mankind may walk therein,—
 The Garden of Gethsemane.

The great world asks with myriad cries,
“ Where is the Gate of Paradise ?
 Ah ! tell us where, that we may see
Some hope within the eyes of Death.
In vain we waste our fleeting breath
With questioning. None answereth ! ”
 Yes. One. He saith—“ Gethsemane ! ”

“ Not that ! not that ! ”—the world doth say :
“ We tire of that. Some other way !
 That answer came from Galilee.
The world has changed since then. We fain
By other path our heaven would gain.
May we not reach it save through pain ?
 We weary of Gethsemane !

" The shadows are too dark which wait
As Dwellers round that Mystic Gate.
 Their gloom foretells its agony.
The bitter cup—the bloody sweat—
The loneliness by Fear beset :—
Is there none other pathway yet,
 But thine—O dark Gethsemane ? "

None other, though ye seek in tears
The heaped-up wisdom of the years.
 In every age, from sea to sea,
The Revelation, when it came,
No matter by what Sign or Name,
Was one and evermore the same,
 And came through some Gethsemane.

Nay—more : none wholly 'scape the path !
Is it not true that suffering hath
 Its toll from all humanity ?
We cannot, if we would, resist.
And walk it howsoe'er we list,
Defying it, or one with Christ,
 We all must tread Gethsemane.

The painful search that man hath made
For Path that may this Path evade
 Is its own bitter irony !
He treads it still who thinks to shun :
And call it what he may, each one
Will tread the Path, escaped by none,
 Which leads through Life's Gethsemane.

That Sorrow is Man's heritage,
Is written on Life's every page,
 And points each known philosophy :
But we may choose if it assume
The hopeless darkness of the tomb,
Or that divine expectant gloom
 Which brooded o'er Gethsemane.

He who would fain achieve the state
Of Spirit made Initiate
 Of Life's great Secret Mystery,
Walks in the Garden without Fear :
He hears the Voice that whispers clear,—
“ I, too, have wept and suffered here !
 I also trod Gethsemane ! ”

He knows that in the dead of night
Darkness itself may call to sight
 Angelic Forms of Ministry :
And cheered, with such companionings,
He faces what the Vigil brings.
Till Dawn, with healing on its wings,
 Brightens above Gethsemane.

It may be none will every know
What secret bitterness of woe
 May form that Garden unto thee ;
Nay, you may deem yourself outcast,—
Think you have failed, from first to last,—
And never know till it is past.
 That *that* was your Gethsemane.

Suffering! Thine un-deciphered Name
Seems traced in characters of flame
 Across the dark. We cannot see
Or read the Name. The Letters shine :
And in their light our souls divine
That depthless mystery by whose sign
 Eden became Gethsemane.

What Great New Name those Letters spell
Each soul may learn in its own hell :
 No Kabala hath given that key.
We take the parable as writ.
And meanings bright and infinite
Shine through the veil enshrouding it :—
 For Easter crowned Gethsemane.

A PETITION.

THE peaceful twilight hour
 Broods over earth and sky :
One dreaming cloud in the West still holds
 The sunset's memory.

Alone in the azure depths,
 Alone in the deep afar,
But lovelier still from its loneliness,
 There throbs the evening star.

Scarce a breath in the tranquil air,
 Or a wave on the sleeping sea.
Oh ! Spirit of Peace, you are everywhere !
 Have you not one word for me ?

LINES WRITTEN ON A FRIEND'S
BIRTHDAY.

YES ; I have long believed it,—
That Time in truth is naught,—
Non-actual,—unreal,—
Existent but in thought :
A business-like arrangement
For folks' convenience ;
But planetary, solar,
And local in its sense.
For data of the spirit,—
The heart's realm, not the brain's,—
A vaster computation,
Than that of time obtains.
Thus is it with true Friendship.
It boasts an almanac
Whose cycles parabolic
Defy the Zodiac.
When was it that the Friendship
I celebrate to-day
Began its evolution ?
What years have passed away ?

Is it fifteen ? or twenty ?
A hundred ? or but one ?
Time (I observed) is nothing.
A Friendship once begun,
If it be real and living,
Has all the worlds in fee :
And views Time from the standpoint
Of an Eternity.

Forgive me, if but lightly
I seem of things to speak
Which should be uttered gravely.
I think his faith is weak
Who cannot jest a little
Over his theories ;
Or fails to see life's humour
When tears are in his eyes.
To-day both tears and humour
Should in this verse find place
If it, our path of Friendship,
In any true way, trace.
For—truth—both tears and humour
Have found a place therein,
And both are so commingled
That each doth t'other win !
The humour hath such kindness,
The tears such memories bright,
That neither must be stinted
The share it claims by right
Of honour in a Friendship
That doth for us combine

The Major and the Minor,
 The Shadow and the Shine.
 'Tis meet I sing of Friendship
 As something very great ;
 For were it not for Friendship
 My path were desolate.
 Changes both great and many,
 Dear Friend, have touched us both ;
 And some, alas ! mean Sorrow,
 And some—we'll hope—mean growth.
 Some changes touch the Being,
 And some are nominal :
 And some, despite the changing,
 Leave us unchanged through all.
 I will not gloom these verses,
 Nor ask them to express,
 Save in a hint, the changes
 That brought me loneliness.
 And that hint's only given
 To point my reason plain
 For saying that true Friendship
 Shall all my praises gain.
 For still its voice gives music
 To cheer my heart and hand,
 Now that Love's Other Voices
 Have reached the Silent Land.

And I to-day reviewing
 Our Friendship in its growth,
 Look at one thought which makes it
 Sacred—I think—to both.

For in it lies remembrance
Of One who loved you well,
Of Whom, in all our meetings,
Somewhat remains to tell.
In Her you saw how brightly
Faith lights life's tangled ways :
To Her you brought much sunshine
In th' evening of her days.
Could claim on me be dearer
To make a Friendship dear ?
Could any thought shine clearer
In Memory's atmosphere ?
You know how deep the rev'rence
That made me kneel to Her,
Even when my years of Manhood
Stood nigh " to forty year."
You know the love that hallows
The Mother's Name to me :
You know how fresh and living
I hold Her memory.
Were other factors wanting
Which make a Friendship good,
On this—alone—unaided—
Our Friendship might have stood.

But others are not lacking :—
Kindness that passes count
(I cannot " add " when figures
Above the million mount !):—
Bright wit, and conversation
Which flags not on the wing :—

And last, and most important,
 We laugh at the same thing !
 Nor is Diversion lacking
 In much we think and do ;
 For we "agree to differ"
 In many points of view.
 It argues Understanding
 When Yea and Nay can meet,
 And both accept a Victory,
 And neither own Defeat !
 So, thrive my Provocations !
 So, welcome your Attack !
 And long may our Agreement
 No point of Difference lack !

Forgive reiteration ;
 And to the Thought respond,
 That Time is an Illusion,
 And true Life lies beyond.
 In planetary matters
 We'll not deny Time's sway,
 Nor fight its ruthless logic,
 Which sweeps our dreams away.
 But we—I hope—are conscious
 Of Something (ah ! how much !)
 Which that same crushing logic.
 Can never even touch.
 And chief of all that Something,
 Beyond analysis,
 Unseen—and immaterial,
 And yet which truly Is,

Stands that most subtle essence
Which all are conscious of,
Yet none can quite determine,—
The Force that makes for Love.
Its modes, no doubt, are many :
But none serves higher ends
Than that which we discover
In the good love of Friends.
You know that mode,—none better ;
You know, too, it survives
All changes, to the Last One,
And every change outlives.
Own, Friend, the world of Spirit
Is made Our world herein,
Since Love most truly moulds us,
Yet truly is Unseen.
Friendship is thus a symbol
By means of which we prove
The Thought of Life Eternal
Is touched by those who love.

Thus come we to the Wherefore
Which gives the Q.E.D.
Since Friendship seems unhampered
By our mortality,
It follows very clearly
The Birthday of a Friend
Opens a computation
That Time will fail to end.
A sense of Youth perennial
It serves well to recall.

It says—"Take heart! Look forward!
 Life is not all in all.
 Behold! though years are passing
 You still of *Birth* Days speak,
 As though a Force were in you
 That years could not make weak:
 As if the days before you
 Were at their Origin:
 And life were just beginning,
 Renascent from Within."
 And so it is. Believe it!
 Cling to this utter Faith,—
 That Life is one long Birthday
 To its last hour of Death.

So, Friendship speed my Greeting!
 May Love, whose Life endures,
 Whose Birthdays last for ever,
 Bring Blessing, Friend, to yours!

AN APOLOGY IN TRIOLETS.

I INTENDED to write
 A Sonnet to Jane.
Something *piquante* and light
I intended to write.
In cold blood, and despite
 My reason's disdain,
I intended to write
 A Sonnet to Jane.

I wanted it new
 In expression and phrase.
It needn't be true,
But I wanted it new.
For though Thought must pursue
 Somewhat oft-trodden ways,
I wanted it new
 In expression and phrase.

But each thing that I saw,
 Or imagined, or heard,
Was a slave to Love's law.
Yes ; each thing that I saw
Had this terrible flaw.
 Love had used, in a word,
Everything that I saw,
 Or imagined, or heard !

From the flowers I sought
A simile apt.
But threadbare all thought
Which from flowers I sought !
I was surely distraught
When in poesy wrapt,
From the flowers I sought
A simile apt.

The lily and rose
Have so often been used
In such case. Yes,—one knows
The lily and rose
Have sunk to mere prose.
All flowers I refused.
The lily and rose
Have too often been used.

The sunshine is trite :
And what of the stars ?
They're impossible—quite !
The sunshine is trite.
One is in a sad plight.
For if good sense debars
The sunshine as trite,
What—what of the stars !

A "nymph" or a "fay"—
Like the rest, have grown old !
Who believes in, to-day,
A nymph or a fay ?

Their day's passed away,—
A tale that is told!
A "nymph" or a "fay"—
Let them rest!—they are old.

"The Joy of my Heart,"
Or "the Light of my Eyes"?
Ah, bah! in great part
The joy of my heart
Is too subtle for Art!
All language belies
The joy of my heart,
And the light of my eyes!

Love is sadly to blame:
He has babbled so much!
Everywhere 'tis the same,
Love is sadly to blame!
Every love-thought and name
Has a Comedy "touch."
Love is sadly to blame,
He has babbled too much.

My Sonnet's unwrit!
Love likes what is young.
It is not lack of wit—
That my sonnet's unwrit;
'Tis that language won't fit
Thought grows old on the tongue.
My Sonnet's unwrit:
Love likes what is young.

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

ADAPTED FROM A SHORT POEM BY GUSTAV HARTING.

It was an old custom in certain parts of England amongst the country folk to wait in the Church Porch for death-omens on the Eve of St. John. It was believed that the ghosts of those who were to die within the year would appear at midnight.

ALMOST the dead of night ! The moon in the
cloudless heaven sails high.
The village, flooded by its light, is sleeping peacefully.

The roofs shine white : the shadows black checker
the road between.
Mystery, born of the solemn hour, is wrought into the
scene.

It looks unnatural and weird, so silent and so bright !
The Spirit World must be astir on such an elfin night.
'Twould scarce seem strange if things unseen were
now revealed to sight.

But see,—a man steals down the road : he creeps from
door to door :
Anon he looks behind, in fear ; then hastens on once
more.



And whither goes he in such haste, with such a
cautious foot?
From time to time he makes a pause, as if irresolute.

Now see him reach the churchyard gate,—look
furtively around,—
Then cross himself, and hurry through the cypress-
guarded ground :
A moment more he gains the porch, shadowed in
gloom profound.

One moonbeam through its lancet slants athwart the
heavy gloom :
All else is dark as is a vault and silent as the tomb.

He sees a corner dense and dark ; he crouches, silent,
there.
Liker to one who comes to rob, than one who looks to
prayer.

Who is this worshipper who shrinks from man's and
heaven's sight?
What is his quest that it should need the dead high-
noon of night?

Mysterious is his mission,—dark,—with fateful issue
fraught ;
The quest of broken-hearted man, by misery over-
wrought,
Who seeks to know the hidden things Nature
revealeth not.

For every Eve of St. John—(who lists may read the
legend old)—

He who will bide by the Church Porch when the mid-
night hour is tolled,

Will see a revelation strange,—a ghostly train of those
For whom the span of mortal life is drawing nigh its
close.

Yes: even so. The wraiths of such as lie beneath
Death's doom

Will troop past, dim with spectral light, and dark with
shrouded gloom.

All phantom-pale the dolorous train will pass him
slowly by:

And or ever yet the year be out, those thus beheld
will die.

Here, then, this man has come to-night, to read the
future dim,

With the strange hope that in the doom, foreshadowed
thus to him,

His own release in death (for, ah! release in truth
'twill be!)

May be revealed: that in that wan and woful company,
That shadowy Brotherhood of Death, his own face he
may see.

For alienation, and distrust, hard words and bitterness
Have come betwixt his wife and him; and if their
love were less

Its ruin, too, were less of pain : but being true and
great—
None the less true because denied,—it leaves them
desolate.

The home, once bright, is darkened now with constant
plaint and strife :
And, thwarted and defeated There, he has no care
for life.

But, stay ! from belfrey clock the hour of midnight
soon will chime.
He shudders. Hope has turned to dread. The
solemn place and time

Make nature quail ; and that desire with which he
hither came
Now seems to show a cruel face and wear an evil
name.

Yet all the more he burns to see the grisly phantom
sight,
And in his eagerness he leans full forward in the light.

The ghostly muster-roll is near. The pallor of the
tomb
Comes o'er the moonlight Now—it comes !—the
unveiled face of doom !

..... God ! he recoils. Ah, look ! Between the
cypress trees there stands
A woman's form. She looks at him, and stretches
out her hands.

White shines the moonlight on the face. Before him
plain as life,
The well-known features, once so loved, rise in the
dark,—his wife!

.

She, too, had come on the selfsame quest, the mystic
train to see,
Longing to know—as he—if Hope for her in death
might be.

Neither the other's presence knew : on both the
moonlight shone :
And each to each became the doom revealed by the
Eve of St. John!

.

She shrank away. He stayed, aghast. Both watched
through the night with tears.
She thought of the man she once loved well in the
far-off happy years.

And death was coming to him—to him ! Such was
of doom *his* share ;
Whilst hers would be a lonely age, and the weight of
lifelong care,—
Regret that never could—ah, no ! And she knelt in
a passion of prayer.

And she prayed that death might fall on her, and not
on him alone !
For both had been to blame—she most ! She was the
guiltier one !



And as the dawn did chase the dark, even so in the
 woman's soul
That prayer did chase dark thoughts away, and a
 sunrise over her stole.

And remorse and remembrance did their work in the
 husband's heart as well :
Prophetic on his ears rang out the sound of that
 funeral knell.

The angry word was often checked : the taunt died
 unexpressed :
And the fire of a love that once had been bright was
 lit anew in his breast.

As time went on, he often looked on the woman's
 face : and it wore
Beneath the mask of years the look of the girl and
 the bride once more.

And through the voice made hard and rough with
 years of sullen strife,
She thought she heard the lover speak, as he turned
 and called her " wife."

And calmly the days went by, undimmed by the
 angry word or the tear ;
And the weeks were lengthened into months, and the
 months grew into the year.

And never a word did either speak of what was seen
 that night ;
But they watched each other, and wondered if God's
 mercy, infinite,

Would stay fulfilment of the doom. And still the
days wore on,
Till the summer brought the year once more to the
mystic Eve of St. John.

.

Again the village lies asleep in the balmy tranquil
night.
A man and woman stand at the door of their house
in the broad moonlight.

They hold one another's hand as the chimes of
midnight give their toll ;
They cannot speak, for the tears fall fast, and great
joy is in their soul.

They know at last how it befel that Fate had made
indeed
Each to the other play the part of the Fate both
sought to read.

And they think of that night a year ago, and of all
the pain thereof ;
And they see how all has worked for Good. And,
linked anew in love,

From both their hearts the thought goes up :—
“ Love teaches us to live :
Live and forgive, as we forgiveness crave Thy love
should give !

“ Last year we rashly prayed for death : this year we
plead for life !
For life to mend, if yet we may, those broken years
of strife.

“ And we plead that still, in life or death, love’s hand
may lead us on,
Till our repentance and Thy Love change into
benison
The hour which was revealed to us in that blessed
Eve of St. John ! ”

TO "THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES."

I LOOK to you still, my Belovèd :
O, help me in my task !
Surely your help is ready
And waits but for me to ask.

It may be that I can help you
By doing what you would love :
It may be that you can help me
In ways that I know not of.

My task will be wrought the better,
And brighter its hour will be,
If only the faith in your Presence
Is present in both to me.

Not yours is the sad-faced Memory
That drags me to bygone years,
With dull regret that weakens,
And dims true sight with tears.

Such memory would but wrong ye,
Who were in life so brave :
You cannot give less of courage
Than erst your voices gave.

I feel your hands are upon me.
I rise to face the To-day,
Believing that more is given
Than Death hath taken away.

Ye are ever with me, Belovèd ;
What wonder that I should ask
That now, even more than ever,
Ye should help me in my task.

IN THE DUSK.

I SIT at the bedside in the dusk—
The dusk of an April day.
The lamps are lit in the street below
Where some children are laughing at play.
A star shines bright in the West alone :
The lingering sunset hues are gone.

The chimneyed house-roofs opposite
Show dark against the sky :
The tinkling bell for Service rings
From the church in the street hard by.
The dusk is drawing quickly on.
How will it be when the night is gone ?

God ! what an Hour such vigil is,
When we sit by the bedside of one
We have loved all our life, and watch and wait
Till all is over and done !
Truly the dusk draws quickly on
For a Day that was bright when its Morning shone !

Are you asleep ? For at last the sound
Of breath that is drawn in pain



Has ceased a while,—till I almost long
To hear it once again !
The dusk grows deep. The clock ticks on.
I dread each minute, yet grudge it, gone.

Vigilant, here I sit and watch.
Yet I feel, with growing fear,
That I am missing what I seek !—
Something that eye and ear
Fail piteously to catch, in tone
Or vision, ere 'tis past and gone.

The Senses are poor sentinels.
Such Hour eludes them all.
It seems to me the Gates of Life
Are closing like a wall,
And yet that somewhere there is One
From which the bolts and bars are gone !

Something is open ; for I feel
The touch of unknown air.
I give my silent thought to you.
As you are lying there,
See you some new Light coming on ?
Or but the old light well nigh gone ?

Do you remember the dear old Home ? —
Ah ! but I shrink with pain
To think I shall ask that question no more—
Never on Earth again !
Others may love and be loved, but none
Can answer that mem'ry when you are gone.

Oh! there is much I long to ask—
Tell you—and understand.
Hush! Let the silence I must face
Begin whilst I hold your hand,
So shall I feel in it less alone
When the hour strikes and the hand is gone.

Gone! gone! Oh,—bitter word
Of this world of Time and Place!
In faith we may soar above your reach,
But your hour is sad to face,
When the shadows rise where the light once shone,
And the voice is hushed, and the song is done.

Oft have we risen to thoughts that look
Beyond this planet's verge,
Where day and night cease interchange,
And such cycles of Hope emerge
That Future and Past and Present are one
In Life that erases earth's "lost" and "gone."

But human joy and pain assert
Their right to claim their hour:
We may deny their final word,
Yet own their present power.
And whilst on earth we still live on
We needs must mourn for dear days gone.

Silence between us. In the hush
Maybe your spirit feels
That sympathy unspeakable
Silence alone reveals.

May all we shared of Hopes that shone
Now in the silent dark shine on !

.

The dusk is deepening into night.
Not yet is the vigil o'er.
Bring in the lamp and set it there.
Tread softly on the floor.
I hold his hand. The clock ticks on.
So let me watch till the Hour is gone.

ON A COUNTRY ROAD.

THE wayside hedge is full of flowers.
From the growth of tangle and grass
I could almost fancy they look at me,
And beckon as I pass.

Wild-flowers, we are no strangers, we !
By signs that can never be told,
I know I have seen you often before,
In a hundred lives of old.

In summers that were fair as this,
In the ages long gone by,
I have known you well, in sorrow and joy :—
But closed is the memory.

Have I wandered down this very road,
In some life remembered not ?
Were you, as now, in blossom here
In that other life forgot ?

In what dramas strange,—O, wild hedge-flowers !
Whose beauty I answer with tears,
Have you played your part in my history,
Locked up in the long-past years ?



Thought stretches out her hand in the dark
To make the meaning plain,
And tell me why it is your scent
Should move me thus. In vain !

Yet I feel you could tell me of days of mine
Which no present memory gives.
You are fraught with the dim remembrances
Of a hundred by-gone lives.

AT SUNSET.

LADY, your voice gives music to that song,
Worthy the beauty of this eventime.
Upon your lips the verses flow along
With cadence that is sweeter than their rhyme.

Upgazing through the stemwork of this tree,
I see the rose-flush of the sunset sky.
And listening to your voice, it seems to me
The hour is all too beautiful to die.

The lake out yonder surely is a-shine
With visible response to that bright lay :
The very air that whispers through the pine
Listens, and goes more softly on its way.

Some hours there be so full and luminous
The whole world seems at one to make them
good,
And for a moment Nature wears to us
The light of some unknown beatitude.

And such is this. It came, I know not how.
But this I know,—'twill claim in future years
A memory which foretells itself e'en now
In these unbidden but prophetic tears.



TEARS.

THE bitterness of tears is past :
Their tincture burns no more.
It is as if a rainbow spanned
The clouds so dark of yore.

'Tis not that tears no longer fall,—
Swiftly they fall to-day !
But there are Thoughts, like Hands unseen,
Which wipe the tears away.

We scarce can dream of life wherein
No tears to us are given :
We scarce could count such life a gain,
Or wish for such a heaven.

But heaven begins with us on earth
When, ev'n with blinded eyes,
We see the Love that wipes away
The tears that fain must rise.

THE DARK.

THE veil of Light draws back : and lo !
They meet, as face to face,—
The Inner and the Outer Dark,—
Equals,—the Soul and Space.

Beyond our atmosphere the Dark
Reigns in the depths profound
Of unimaginable Space,
Uncrossed by Light or Sound.

A Darkness as unmeasured lies
Around the Soul. No eye
Hath vision for the æthereal swathe
Wherein the soul doth lie.

It is the Light which shuts us in,
And paints with colours fair
Our world,—colours as phantom-frail
As rainbows in the air.

The Light, we know, is but of earth,
An island in the Dark
Wherein the source of Light itself
Is but a wandering spark.

Light, flashing from a million suns
To Darkness adds no jot :
Darkness, which saw their genesis
Will be when they are not.

The Thought of Darkness thrones itself
In that Primordial gloom
Which holds the Wheels of Fire-Mist,—
Life's matrix and its tomb.

He who would reach what Light doth seal
Must pass beyond its bourne,
And seek the Light that knows no hour
Of evening and of morn.

There is a Light within the Dark ;
It doth in Darkness shine ;
Its central source is everywhere,
Nowhere its boundary-line.

I will not rest in any Light
Which earth can give or make,
Lest as I sleep it pass away,
And I in darkness wake.

Confounded in that waking hour,
In truth it well might be
My heart should fail through very fear,
And darkness conquer me.

Oh ! Life and Light ! Oh ! lovely world !
I love thee, as I may,

But still will face th'encircling Dark
Which rings my lighted way.

For dark is all our deepest life,
And dark its hidden springs ;
Unseen Companions move with us
With mystery in their wings.

We know not whence or what our Thoughts,
Our impulses, unknown :
Our smiles and sighs elude the heart
That's " nearest to our own " :

'Tis only in the Dark of Thought
We touch each others' souls ;
Silence and Darkness are their Gates,
Whose Portals love unrolls.

If thou wouldst " know thyself"—what Path ?
To shut the Doors of Sense,
And entering in that Chamber dark,
Watch what may issue thence.

The Dark in which the Soul is found
Knows naught of earthly light,
And is for ever but a void
To earthly brain and sight.

From that veiled Temple, not of hands,
To naught and no one bond,
The soul doth gaze across the Light
Into the vast Beyond,—

The rayless, universal Dark,—
Shroud of the Shining Ones,—
The mystic Robe of Deity,
Starred with ten-thousand suns.

The mortal sight draws, frightened, back :
The soul looks forth unmoved,
Claiming its Heritage Divine,
And by no fear reproved.

It, unabashed and unafraid,
Matches that Boundless Scope
With Field of equal majesty,—
The Infinite of Hope :

With Thought that mates Eternity,—
That laughs at Near and Far,—
And answers back the challenge bright
Of the remotest star.

Oh ! for the sight which is at one
With That which is not Night
Nor Day : the sight which needs
No Sun to give it Light !

God, who art Nameless—All in All !—
With all my soul, I pray,
Give me the Secret and the Sight
Which finds the Darkness, Day !

FLUX.

AH ! but we shall be happy To-morrow !
Out in the sunshine all the day !
Just you and I,—adrift on the river,—
Dreaming the summer hours away !

.

This is the day we dreamed of, dearest,
Out on the river—you and I !
This is no Dream, it is truest Living !
Time stands still, though the hours slip by.

.

Have we awakened ? was it a dreaming ?
See how the river goes slipping away !
All we can do now is just to remember !
For that To-morrow is Yesterday.



AT CORFE.

How are the mighty fallen !
Proud and insolent still,
Tragic in ruin, but royal to the last,
The Castle crowns the hill.

Ah ! they died well, those nobles !
True to their rank to the last.
Far and wide it looks o'er the land,—
A beacon from the Past !

How you must once have been dreaded
With your moated gates of old ;
And your frowning foss, and your donjon keep,—
Palace and torture-hold !

Child of an Age of Iron,
You must be happier now
With your birds and ivies, than when the stain
Of murder was red on your brow.

For built of your ruined stonework,
From the *débris* of your fall,—
The little town safely smiles at your feet :
You did some good after all !

“THE EVENING BRINGS ALL HOME.”

THE skies are dim and grey : and yet I know
'Tis near to sundown, for the light grows low.
The labourers whom we watched at morning go
Out to their work, pace by with footsteps slow.
“ The Evening brings them home.”

So, it has come to this!—the day is done.
So soon—the real race seems but just begun!
So late—we weary for the setting sun!
Yet is the Vespers sung for everyone—
“ The Evening brings them home ”?

Not all—not all! Some toil on homeless seas :
Some knock at doors of which they've lost the keys
For ever : outcast wanderers pay their fees
To death. And can we say indeed of these,
“ The Evening brings them home ”?

'Twas little more than morning in our day
When, ere we knew it, we had lost our way ;
The fair blue sky was veiled in clouds of grey ;
The stones and briars around our footpath lay.
Will Evening bring us home?

The brambles meshed and tore our wandering feet :
The Friends in life we most were fain to meet
Trode other paths : our lips learned to repeat
Earth's saddest word—"farewell!" Rest would be sweet
Did evening bring us home.

Surely we have retrieved the way we lost.
If we have erred, have we not paid the cost?
Have we not borne the heat and faced the frost?
Is not this counted payment, that almost
'Tis Evening :—yet—no home!'

If we have dreamed of some Enchanted Ground,
Of Things which may not on this earth be found,
Of Forms Unseen, and Songs that have No Sound,
Ah! let such Dreams like Angels gather round
And gently lead us home!

Do you remember, heart, how your brave Thought
Went forth at morn? Its brows the lustre caught
Of rainbows by life's Sun and Shower wrought,
Heedless of all that must be faced and fought
Ere evening bring it home.

Youth's Thoughts! on what strong wings were they
upborne!
Now they come back, with garments soiled and torn.
Are these the Thoughts, O heart! which faced the Morn?
Ay: then give welcome, and no word of scorn,
Now Evening brings them home.

Nor do they come alone: for with them, see!
There looms a strange unbidden Company,

With faces recognized by Memory :
Things done and said—almost forgot, may be,—
Which Evening now brings home.

The Disappointments which our life has given :
The Friendships broke : the Sins which Love hath
shriven :
The Faith, ashamed of its own hell and heaven :
They all—for weal or woe—come back at Even,
And bid us take them home !

But let it be ! Let us look round a space
And see if Love allows some Beckoning Face,
If Memory yield some Welcoming Word of Grace,
Some Hope,—a wanderer from our spendthrift days,—
Which Evening may bring home.

The flocks have answered to the herdsman's call :
So late it grows ! so dark the shadows fall !
Birds to their nests :—the toilers great and small,
The rich, the poor, the weary, one and all,
Have to their rest gone home.

'Tis writ—" At Eventide it shall be light."
If the cloud lift a little ere 'tis night,
And give to us some Sign of Sunset bright,
Our hearts shall take the Promise with the Sight,
And both shall whisper " Home ! "

See ! the clouds part : and far away, there lies
A Beatific Vision of the skies !
Oh, God ! we thank Thee : We will close our eyes,
And join the Song, though late and alien-wise,—
" The Evening Brings All Home ! "

A COUNSEL OF HOPE.

WAS it given in a dream when the night was deep,
And the gates of the Soul were unlocked in sleep?

Was the Counsel infused in some way unsought,
Till it gave its colour to all my thought?

Perhaps it came quickly : perhaps in part
It grew from day to day in the heart.

Was it sent because I was thinking of Her,
And yearning for sign that is tenderer

And clearer far than earth accords
To those who mourn? Maybe the words

Were but a reflected memory
Of a Hope She had oft breathed to me.

Or maybe the Faith which has slowly grown
In the Battle of Life to be my own

Was taken and used by the Voice of Love
In a way it scarce was conscious of.

But how it came, and whensoever,
I know that the Message came from Her,
And that Love was the secret messenger.

I know it as truly as though it had been
Spoken by One from the World Unseen,—

A spirit with halo and wings of light,
Or pale ghost walking in darkness of night.

This was the Counsel given to me,
With the force of unseen authority :

“ Do not let my memory keep you back,
Or stay your feet in life's onward track.

“ Do not let it make you less but more
Of the man than you were in the days of yore,

“ The happy days before I died,
When our paths in life ran side by side.

“ If I ever helped you then, my dear,
I can help you now, if you do not fear :—
Ay—more than you dream in your present sphere.

“ If you do not fear—and will only Will
That we be Friends and Companions still,

“ You can help me too, if you will not rave
With that hopeless sorrow that looks at the Grave.

“ You hold me back on my upward path
When you grieve with a grief that such scant faith
hath.

“ You hinder my feet with those self-centred tears ;
You darken my way with those earth-born fears.

" I ask your help as I used to do
When our Plane was one. I look to you

" For the love you never denied me yet.
Oh! give it me still! Do not forget

" That even in life you did not see
The thing that you loved so much in me.

" 'Twas the Heart—was it not?—and the Mind, you
loved :
Yet you saw but the Form wherein they moved.

" They are scarce more hidden now than in days
When we held our converse, face to face.

" Did the Form, then, give the Life? Ah, nay!
It was but used for a life's brief day,
And That which used it passed on its way.

" Oh! what it is to find and to feel
That the only part of life that is real
Is life transfigured to its Ideal!

" To be That you hoped and for which you strove
When your life was true to its Highest Love!

" To learn that in very truth and word,
Eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard,

" Nor heart conceived in hope's fairest field,
The Glory of Being that can be revealed

" When the blinding curtain, which you call Sight,
Is drawn aside in the Unseen Light!

"I was never so near you : never so much
At one with your life, or so close in touch.

"I am in your Thought. Oh ! seek for me there !
I move in your memories, breathe in your prayer !

"I am yours as I never was yours before :
You are mine as you never were mine of yore.

"The Point where the Seen and the Unseen blend
Is at once a Death and a Birth,—an End
That Begins anew. Oh ! listen, my Friend !

"This is the Secret whose Doors stand wide,
Where Morning and Eve stand side by side.

"And I, who speak from the Silence of Death,
With the Voice newborn of the newborn Breath,

"Inspire you here with the truth divine,
Which asks no proof and needs no sign,

"Whereby you KNOW that life is not gone
When it passes from us. It but passes on.

"In this, as in all worlds, nothing is lost :
Least of all is That lost which we prize the most.

"Uplift your heart ; and look o'er head !
For those you have lost, be comforted.

"Believe it, with all your soul and will,—
They are able to love and be loved by you still."

IN THE HARMONY.

LIFE is a Symphony Divine :
Thy Note is given to thee !
And every Note hath its own work
In the Great Harmony.

It asks no greater, grander work,—
Come happiness, come dole !
Content to take its time and place
In the concordant whole.

The sun that draws the circling worlds
Sounds its appointed tone :
Nor less hath ev'n the lowliest leaf
A Note that is its own.

Perhaps the jarring task that seems
A discord unto thee,
Resolves the living strain of Life
Into some higher key !

TO THE CHRISTUS.

FROM every land that worshippeth,
In name, the Christ of Nazareth,
 That Name ascendeth day by day.
From stately fane,—and cloister dim,—
From chapel bare—from prison grim,—
The voice of Praise goes forth to Him
 Who hushed such voice of praise away.

In cities which in life deny
The Life their lips do glorify,
 Preacher and priest the Cross proclaim :
And prostrate crowds who cling and pray,
In hope of sins washed clean away,—
Yet pause to follow in His way,—
 Reiterate the sacred Name.

In mart and street and great exchange
The laws of gain and traffic range
 From secret unto open fraud :
From brothel and from noisome den,
The cry goes up to God and men :
And Wrong that pleads and pleads again
 Is blent with litany and laud.

The smothered cries of agony
From creatures tortured ere they die,—
 Creatures which have His Father's "care"—
Rise from our midst, where, like old Rome
Dealing out death and martyrdom,
Science declares that if good come
 To us, the end makes black means fair !

Our marriage markets shame the sky :
The gloze of prurient secresy
 Passes for what is pure and chaste.
We strive to push each other down
To gain the foremost place and crown.
Our laws exact what they disown :
 Christ's laws are quoted—and displaced.

" His blood-red banner streams afar,"
The choirs sing. Ah ! God of War,
 You smile to scorn the Prince of Peace.
Our flags are hung our altars o'er !
We do not heed, above the roar,
The voice that whispers, as of yore,
 The truths before which battles cease.

Ah ! Man of Sorrows,—Man Divine,—
If Thou dost know of Thy Design,—
 Thy Crucifixion of self-will,—
Thy Mystic Truths,—Thy Precepts grand,—
How little yet we understand,
Methinks that even at God's Right Hand,
 Thou must be crowned of sorrows still.

PROPHECIES.

MOMENTS there be when we are 'ware
Of gleams of far-off splendour :
Thought,—listening,—kneels, and folds her hands,
And doth her throne surrender.

These rise above our present powers
And earthly limitation :
They have no language here save tears,
No voice but Aspiration.

INTUITION.

NOT as the Schools give, gifts are given by Thought.
Ere now a Truth has flashed upon the eyes
Of youth for which the scholar, otherwise,
Has grown old seeking, and has vainly sought.

FAITH.

A STORY OF THE MOUNTAINS.

(*LES DIABLERETS.*)

The following story is well known in the Canton of Valais. The details are given in Professor Bonny's very interesting book on the High Alps. The avalanche, or rather *éboulement*, buried more than fifty chalets, a large number of cattle, and sixteen herdsmen. It occurred on September 25th, 1714.

THE demons of the mountain are asleep.
 The armistice of many a peaceful year
 Has cleared the sombre memory of that hour
 Wherein, well nigh two hundred years ago,
 This valley thundered to the voice of doom.
 See, how, with arabesques of grey and gold,
 The lichens have embossed this riven rock,
 Hiding its scars with rich investiture.
 On slopes of shale which, like a torrent once,
 Rushed, in an earth-flood, down this mountain gorge,
 Fir trees are rooted firm, and willow-weed
 Blossoms at will and sheds the silvery down.
 The gracious and indifferent summer-day
 Smiles in our face, to tell us heartlessly
 Nature can be as fair as she is fierce.
 The Beauty and the Ruthlessness are one.
 The same laws govern both.

But sitting here,
 Beneath the pines, this brilliant August day,
 'Tis hard to realise the forces dire
 That shook the ground as 'twere but yesterday.
 And yet why call them "dire"? Have they not made
 The very beauty which has lured us hither?
 See, how the solemn mountains rise, superb,
 Above the valley! how the glaciers shine!
 There's something in the air, the very light,
 That speaks of loneliness and altitude.
 The demons of the mountain are asleep.
 Yet, here and there, a stone, a splintered rock,
 But newly fallen, as it seems, would hint,
 The sleep has intervals of restlessness.
 Now whilst you sketch a scene that would defy
 A Turner (may your courage ne'er be less!),
 I'll tell a tale they tell of one who heard
 The mountain-demons shout their battle-cry,
 And answered with the "still small voice" of Faith.

"Faith can move mountains.' So the Scripture saith.
 The very Gates of Heaven are built on Faith.
 He would not see high Heaven, though Heaven were
 near,
 Who had not Faith: and with it Heaven is here."
 So preached the curé on S. Thomas' Day,
 To pious folk in Aven. But the words
 Meant little more than oft-repeated truths,
 Which by such repetition lose their force,
 To those who listened,—hearers but in name.
 One man alone in all the little flock

Listened and heard, and hearing, pondered oft.
"Faith can move mountains." So? He looked around
And wondered. Who should better know than he
Whose world was bounded by the snow-crowned hills,
How strong the mountains are? About his home
The great green pastures sloped on every side.
His race had lived in that one Alpine vale
For generations. Never had he seen
A grander place than Sion : nor beheld
A wider circle of the world beyond
Than when from some high peak he caught
The gleaming snows of Valais and Savoie,
The towering sovereigns of the Oberland.
How vast these mountains ! how immutable !
Even the spacious lakes he saw afar
Were but the pools which lay amongst their roots.
Whole towns, with Church and busy Market Place,—
Chateaux and vineyards, farms and villages,—
Were packed and hidden, like mere toys, away
Deep in their rutted vales. The waterfalls
Which from below seemed cradled in the clouds,
Dwindled and shrank to slender silver threads
Far, far beneath the feet of him who climbed.
Even the morning and evening sun
Gave their best glories to those snowy heights,
Held converse with them when the world was dark,
And challenged them with sunset and with dawn.
Surely these mountains were the throne of God,
Immutable as His eternity !
And yet they could be moved by Faith—by Thought.
Yes : and he felt 'twas true in some strange way,

So great and living seemed indeed this Faith
To him.

Thus pondered good Marcel Dufour.
And oft the thoughts recurred, and forced his speech,
Moving the laughter of his wife and friends.
They deemed such thoughts a folly : Holy Writ
Being a thing apart from daily life,—
Not to be quoted in the open air
As if it fitted into Nature's ways,
Or were a working code for week-a-days.
Only the Curé said,—“ Friend, you are right.
Your Faith assures you of its living power.
I doubt not it will prove itself, and move
At least the mountain of that weight of sin
Which lies so heavy on us oftentimes.
Keep you your Faith unmoved.”

In summer-time
Marcel would quit the village and his home
And bring a herd of cows for pasturage
To this high mountain vale. His chalet stood
Close underneath a limestone cliff which rose
For forty feet above the stone-strewn roof.
Half hut, half storehouse, roughly built of wood,
The last of all the chalets in the vale,
It gave him shelter oftentimes for weeks
Betwixt the latest and the earliest snows.

The *régain* had been reaped. September's sun
Still made the days as summer, though his rays

Flung slanting lines, and e'en the morning's light
Was almost like a summer afternoon.
The shadows were no longer luminous.
The unseen fire of growth within the ground
Which, even before the melting snows exhaled,
Sent up the earliest flowers like little flames,
Had burnt itself away. The nights grew long.
The chalets scattered here and there had store
Of goodly crops. The sunset of the year
Was deepening fast.

But, as the waning month
Wore nigh its end, there came a portent dire.
A voice went through the vale which made men's hearts
Fail them for fear. The mountain spoke,—
And some responding spirit whispered "Hush!"
The demon of the mountain was astir.
What was his word? a prophecy of doom?
Long had he lain asleep:—what did it mean?
Again, and louder, came the awful voice.
Faces grew white, and groups of frightened folk
Gathered to take swift counsel, each of each.
And yet feet lingered when they should have fled,
And hearts that presaged the impending ill
Remembered years of fair security
And hoped. All would be well! Two days passed by,
And naught was seen. Only they heard the Voice.

Marcel was standing at his chalêt door
On the third morning. Far away, the herd
Was trooping down the valley. Through the air,

The fairy music of the cattle-bells
Was all the sound that fell upon his ear.
How peaceful looked the scene, in sunshine bathed !
The grass was green as in a Northern Spring.
And yet the limestone mountain, towering high,
Pencilled with shadows blue as was the sky,—
The snow-fields shining in the morning sun,—
The solemn pine woods,—and the cloudless heaven,—
Though they appeared so smiling and secure,
Could not quite hush the memory which recalled
The mountain's muttered malesons. He sighed :
" Faith can move mountains. Can it bid them rest ? "
With anxious eyes he scanned the mountain's face.
What could he see ? Was there no hand which traced
A spectral Word of Doom on that vast wall ?
No section-line where line was none before ?
Look well ! Had Hearing given Sight the hint ?
Or was there truly something sinister
In that huge pinnacle of shining rock ?
Was it all fancy ?—did not something move,
A thought,—a quiver,—passing like a shade
Across the sunlit precipice ?—a change
As swift, as sure, and as mysterious,
As that of eyes, seen through a mask, which change
From observation to malevolence ?
And hark ! the muffled clangour comes once more :
And louder,—As with threat more vehement,
With long reverberating roll, it grows,—
It swells ! Ah, see !—The nearer precipice
Begins to shake,—crumbles,—and breaks away !
Fly !—ere it be too late ! The avalanche !

God in High Heaven!—Is this the Judgment Day?
With one stupendous thunder-blast of death,
The mountain side came headlong crashing down.

.

The demons of the mountain are asleep.
God grant they wake not ; for their feud is fierce.
The Forces which evolve earth's fairest scenes
Are those which work with equal ruthlessness
Its desolations, to evolve therefrom again
New beauty, till the cycle is complete.
From flaming nebula to living worlds,
From living worlds to planetary death,
And back perhaps to Fire-Mist once again,
The universal Forces work their will.
The pendulum of Change swings on for ever.
Our hills have risen out of unknown seas ;
The seas we know submerge the foretime hills.
The smiling valley we behold to-day
Grew from the barren waste of yesterday :
That barren waste was but the burial yard
Of this fair valley as it stood that day
When poor Marcel beheld the mountain move.

.

Such moments have no measurement as Time,
And many moments passed ere yet the noise—
A paralysing roar of sound on sound—
Died into silence—silence as of death.
Turned as it were to stone, conscious of doom
But lost to movement and all sense of life,

He stood there, like a statue of despair.
It was the silence and the dark at last
Which touched him like a Hand and bade him wake.
He woke—to see the blackness of the tomb ;—
To hear that utter silence which evokes
A sense to which mere listening is but dull.
He woke—to face the truth—the truth at once—
The truth, which made the blackness still more black,
And sent it sweeping inwards round his heart
To plant its source and blackest centre there,—
God of the Quick and Dead !—buried alive !

When, splintering from the weighted mountain-side,
The precipice gave way and crashed below,
One mass of rock came slithering o'er the cliff
Against whose wall the little chalet leaned.
A cavern formed a storehouse for the hut,
The roof was built against the beetling cliff.
The falling rock slid downward o'er this cliff
And rested on it slantwise toward the ground,
Shutting the hut uninjured underneath.
Above this shelving slab of fallen rock,
The fast-accumulating shale and stone,
Layer on layer, was piled, until the hut
Was buried deep. The pasturage around—
Became a vast moraine, barren and dead.
Chalets and herds and men lay sepulchred
Beneath that overwhelming cataclysm,—
That thund'rous paraphrase of " Earth to Earth ! "

The cannonade of that wild battlefield

Of Nature carried far its tale of dread,
Making the shuddering air its messenger :
And rumour, scarcely heavier of wing,
And far more clamorous of catastrophe,
Spread farther still, and darkened many a home.
From all the country round, the folk came up,
To see the awful scene, and search for those
They feared were lost. The desolated vale
Told its own tale—a tale few living lips
Could tell. Oft had this country heard like tale.
'Twill hear it oft again. No need for words.

Sadly she came—the wife of poor Marcel,
To find if sign of him she mourned were left.
Sadly she viewed the waste of shattered rock
That stretched where once had smiled rich pasture land.
Gone was the chalet,—gone the wall of cliff,—
No sign ! all buried till the Judgment Day !
Sadly and slowly she retraced her step
Back to her widowed home. Her man was dead :
Her children fatherless. God rest his soul !

“ Faith can move mountains ! ” pregnant words were
these

For one, grown mad with agonizing thought,
To mutter, when the mountain side had closed
Above his head. “ What Faith can stead me now ?
What Faith could move this roof—or burst these walls
Which gave me burial but denied me death ?
Oh ! for such Faith ! Nay, nay ! such Faith comes not
As gift in hour of need ; it grows as life ;—
It is the life. It comes not from without.

My Faith was never living. Let me die!"
Yet as he brooded in that living vault,
The thought flashed on him like a flash of light,—
What if this Faith were living after all?
What if its hand had moved the mountain thus,
And held it up from crushing him to death?—
What if 'twas Faith that kept him still alive—
And saved his soul from madness and despair?—
A faith so faint, he scarcely felt its life,
He scarcely counted it a thing alive,
Yet even in that faint and feeble state,
A thing of Life so vital and so strong
It kept him living in this place of death?—
Was he ungrateful—thankless? Had he scorned
His Faith for being such a little thing
When 'twas in truth the signature of God
Within his soul,—the germ of Life Divine?
Faith could move mountains! Well,—suppose it had!
Suppose the movement which had saved his life
Had moved obedient to that mystic Force?
The rill of water which had forced its way
Into this burial-house, was it but part
Of some great plan, like that of old which made
The rock yield water in a thirsty land?
Faith works by acts,—the courage which it gives
To him who feels its power. The man who sits
In torpid longing, or in dumb despair,
Waiting for some vague miracle of Faith,
Or argues since no miracle is wrought
That Faith is folly—he knows naught of Faith.
Faith works its miracles by natural means,—

The superhuman strength which it inspires,—
The heart unwavering and the tireless arm.
Up! Up! and prove that Faith is not a dream.
Make this dead mountain move: compel the earth
To yield a passage for its master, Will.
Take courage! Hath not Heaven afforded signs
To cheer the heart and strengthen hand and arm?
Food is not lacking in the buried hut,
Nor means of light, enough to last awhile;
The trickling stream is like a living Word,
Its sound almost as welcome to the ear
As to the lip its pure life-giving draught.
It was for this dark day that text was heard:
For this it rooted deep its mystic truth:
For this predestinated hour it shone.
The Curé preached indeed the verbal truth:
But 'tis for thee the Honour comes to prove
The words are true, however they be read,
If but the Faith be true in more than words.

No need to tell the daily groove of toil,
The patient, plodding unremitted toil;
The hope that turned at times to dull despair,
The dull despair which braced itself anew
And once more faced what seemed a hope forlorn.
Twice did the passage cut with so much toil
Fall in for well nigh half its length. And once
Strength failed, and sickness laid him low.
But still through all, the inmost Faith died not.
It flickered low: it had its bitter hours:
But never wholly ceased to shine, or failed
To brighten dreams with pictured rest achieved,

Confirm the feeble knees, strengthen the hand,
And inculcate that superhuman will
Which gives the faith-fired man the strength of ten.

The weeks dragged slowly by. The outside world
From Autumn passed to Winter. Snow lay deep
On all the upper mountain lands. It robed
The desolated vale with purity,
And hid the cruel scars with peacefulness.
Marcel Dufour had lost all count of time.
The even temperature within that cave,
The darkness, blending day and night in one,
Gave little hint of how the hours went by.
Sometimes he thought surely a year had passed ;
The retrospect of loneliness and night
Seemed as a lifetime : yet but yesterday
Appeared the day when last he saw his home.
The powers of mind and body were engrossed
On one great task, centred in one great thought.
He worked and worked as one possessed, distraught.
Sometimes when utter weariness would urge
Its claim, or lifelong custom seemed to strike
The hour of rest, he slept as one forspent.
Then would he dream of light, the open air,
His home, and those he loved : to wake again
Half mad at such a waste of precious time,
And back to wield the blunted tools afresh.

The sun shone bright that year on Christmas Day.
The air was calm and windless. Winter smiles
In these high mountain valleys with a smile

Of most æthereal austerity.
The sunshine on the snow seems crystallised.
Blue are the shadows, delicate as those
That lie within a pearl-embosomed shell.
A world of sculptured purity and light.

Such was the scene that burst with blinding flash
Upon Marcel Dufour that Christmas noon.
For hours the man had known the end was near.
He read it in the stone at which he worked ;
He heard it in the sound of every blow ;
He felt it in the ichor of his blood,
Which seemed to answer to the coming air,
As in the veins of glass the silver moves :
He knew it in the presage of his heart
Which bade him work as ne'er he worked before,
And told him that the hour was close at hand
When Faith would truly lose itself in sight !
The thinning soil and rubble fell apace
Around him as he toiled. The earth slipped down
Again and yet again like blinding veils
To shut away the goal he strove to reach.
But suddenly it stayed, and with one stroke
He cleared a crevice in the tunnelled path.
The blazing daylight struck him like a blow.
Madly he worked, and wider made the rent ;
The sunshine fell upon him like a flame.
A cry, half sob, half shriek, burst from his lips,
As, crawling out, he fell upon his face,
And in the snow, lay weeping like a child.
"The mountains move ! The miracle is wrought !

Faith has been given. Lo! the work is done!
Thanks be to God—the God of Calvary!
The God of Sinai and of Ararat!
To Him who was transfigured on the Mount,
To Him who faced the Tempter on the Height,
The Lord of all the Everlasting Hills!”

And now you think he had no more to dread,
The dungeon opened,—liberty regained?
It was not so. The passage back to life
Was not yet trod. Much still remained to do.
The smile of Alpine Winter may be bright,
But it is pitiless. The winter day
Would not prolong its span by one brief hour;
The lengthening shadows took their silent way
Across the snow. At night this ice-bound height
Would be as cold as are the Polar seas.
The man was spent with long privation, toil,
And all the anguish of the prisoner.
His home was miles away. The drifts were deep.

But that strong will which had so long upheld
The buried man failed not when liberty
Brought perils scarcely less than those he faced
And conquered in the living oubliette.
He knew the mountains well; and though the scene
Was strangely changed since last it met his eyes,
Marcel, the born and practised mountaineer,
Felt courage rise to face a danger known.

That danger had been vanquished when, at last,

He stood upon the hillside, looking down
Toward Aven and his home. The wintry dusk
Was thickening through the valley. Here and there
A light shone out. The blue wood-smoke went up
From chalets where the hearth was bright and warm.

Oft had he thought of this supremest hour,
Pictured it—now in this way, now in that ;
But not like this—never like this ! 'Twas strange !
The chill of winter twilight touched his heart.
Was Faith about to fail him now at last
When its strong hand had holpen him so long ?
What fear was this which bade his footsteps pause ?
There lay his home before him—close at hand ;
But dared he go and enter ? Suddenly
He realised how frail and insecure
Our foothold is in life. Places can change :—
Ay ! in a flash :—who knew that more than he ?
But places are less mortal than are those
Who call them “home.” How would he find his home ?
He had not thought of changes there : nor thought
How changed was he who came to take up life
Just where he left it. Had it stayed unchanged ?

The twilight deepened. Far in the vale below
A dog howled fitfully. A jödelling call
Came on the quiet air and died away
In distant echoes. All was still again.

Slowly the man came down the mountain side.

.

Next morning, long before the day was light,
Aven was all astir, and messengers
Went off post haste to bring the Curé back.
The holy man had gone but yester eve
To Sion, where his brother lived. In haste
They hurried down. They bade him come at once,
Nor pause in coming. Urgent was their need.
For see!—the village was distraught with fear.
One child was like to die,—God keep us all!—
The youngest girl of that Marcel Dufour
Who lost his life at the Diablerets.
The widow, too, was almost mad with fright.
Spirits malefic were abroad. Last night
A thing had come to pass beyond belief.
What was it?—Ah! 'twas terrible to tell.
A ghost—a revenant—had been seen. 'Twas true.
No less than three had seen it:—Veuve Dufour,
The little child, and he—the speaker. Yes:
He too had seen it,—plain as flesh and blood,
But like a spectre. And it cried aloud,
“'Tis I! Marcel Dufour! I am not dead;
The mountain has been moved—and I return!”
“Marcel Dufour! the herdsman who was lost?”
“The same. Ah, Sir! he used to tell us all
Faith could move mountains,—as you preached to us.
His phantom cried the words aloud. *Mon Dieu!*
But it was horrible! The widow swooned.
The child was in delirium of fear.
For it—the ghost—it stretched abroad its arms
And ran to clasp her: but the mother shrieked
And snatched the child away before she swooned.”

"You say he spoke? Why, man, this was no ghost.
It was Marcel himself. The man's alive ;
And has returned ! Where is he now ? Speak, quick."
" Ah, sir ! it was no living man we saw.
He fled away : he vanished into air.
A pale light shone around him. And Annette,
My wife,—she swears she heard a booming noise,
As if some tomb beneath the ground were rent,—
And looking out, she saw a figure, veiled
And shining white, which beckoned. And——"

" No more !

I fear a piteous thing has happened, Friend.
You say he fled ? "

" Ay : vanished into air."

" The air, methinks, was kinder than his home.
'Twould welcome him—if with too cold a hand.
Good Friends, you all are wrong. It was the man
Marcel himself. No ghost. I will return
With you :—pray God we be not all too late ! "

" We trusted you would come to exorcise
The unquiet ghost, and bid it rest."

" Alas !

It may be we shall find it is at rest."

See now the village when the Curé comes,
Incredulous, yet listening to his words,—
The widow, sobbing in twice-told distress,—
Sad terror which had turned to sore regret.
Till now she'd feared to ope the chalet door,

And now she longs to fling the portal wide,
And send her voice through all the circling hills—
“Marcel ! Marcel ! return ! We wait for you !”
The priest gives orders, and the men obey.
They start at once to scour the countryside.
Search-parties climb the mountains. Calls ring out
In the frosty air and make the echoes wake.
Nor is the search in vain. Not far away,
Beyond a pinewood on the mountain slope,
They find Marcel. For refuge he had sought
A herdsman’s hut which he himself had built.
There he lies silent, motionless, and spent ;
Too weak to speak, too dazed to understand.

Gently they bear him thence. With food and wine
He rallies fast, but most with cheering words.
The news flies fast, the searchers join once more,
And on a litter made of boughs of pine
Homeward they bear the Lost and Found Again.

That night he tells his story, whilst the fire
Lights up the faces gathered round the hearth :—
The children listening, awed and open-eyed ;
The wife, with her “*Mon Dieu !*” and clasping hands,
Not weary of the wonder of his face,—
A widow with her bridal joy renewed.
And “Ah ! Marcel Dufour,” the Curé says,
“Your sermon is the best I ever heard !
I preached in words, but you in living deeds.
Did my words help you ? Yours shall help me more.
Faith can move mountains ? Yes. A truth lies there,

And Truth, no doubt, is true on every plane.
 But when I spoke those words that day, good friends,
 It was of spiritual things I spoke.
 The Spirit, not the Letter, is the Life :
 Mountains there be of immaterial kind.
 But for these mountains visible and dense,—
 Can Faith move them ? In one sense, Yes,—it can !
 'Tis Faith within himself and for himself
 Which nerves the man who climbs and conquers
 them,—
 The human hands which tame them with our roads,
 And thus remove their prisoning barriers :—
 The feet which leave their footprints on the snows,
 The hearts undaunted by their dominance.
 And though the mountains of themselves should move,
 And fall on us, Faith standeth steadfast still,
 And is at one with that Eternal Word
 Which was ere yet the Stars of Morning sang."

.

The demons of the mountains are asleep.
 The summer day has touched meridian.
 No cloud is in the sky. The valley dreams.
 The warm rich incense of the sun-warmed pines
 Exhales its balm, until some waft of air
 Carries it up the hillside, and awakes
 A sense of scent as fine and delicate,
 As seems that aerial sound of distant bells
 To sense of hearing. Mountains have their moods,
 As all things on this planet have, in truth.
 To pass them we must touch the Life Within.

Then all moods cease for us for evermore.
And in all moods of Nature we behold
The steadfast working of one steadfast Law.
Faith that would move the mountains must have gained
The point at which it is at one with them,
At one with Nature, both Unseen and Seen,
And asks no miracle to prove its power.
Then miracles would be at its command.

THE STARRY SKY.

SLOWLY the heavens open up their depths :
The azure roof of light is drawn away :
And we behold the Infinite Immense
Which lies beyond the veil which we call Day.

Our Star of Day—Lord of our House of Life,—
Brooks not that other star our homage share
When he is in our skies. He roofs us in
With phantom-vault of sun-illumined air.

The utmost circle of our firmament
Is but a pin's point in the realms of Night,
The first step toward a threshold whence the mind
Launches itself to wing ethereal flight.

The crystal-clear velarium of light
Is now withdrawn, and lo ! the starry sky—
Beyond conception vivid, vast, sublime,—
Challenges Man with its Infinity.

Now do we feel we swim in the abyss :
Above, below, and all around, we trace
The constellations of the planisphere,
As we sail on athwart the seas of space.

Eternal Scripture of the Universe!—
Cabala of Glory, written from of old,
Open to all, yet read by few, where suns
Trace mystic signs in characters of gold!

O, Magic Night,—Revealer!—Hierophant!—
The soul grows proud with joy and dumb with awe,
To claim thy Fields for its inheritance,
Thou silent dread Evangelist of Law!

The boundless Vision of the Soul of Man,
When thought grows faint, still wings its tireless
flight,
Welcomes the cycles of Immensity,
And, unabashed, doth fall the Infinite.

It takes the signature those million suns
Blazon with silent splendour on the sky,
And spells it as the Shadow of the Name
That manifests a Thought of Deity.

Vast beyond ken as is the spectacle,
'Tis but a Veil that lifts to those who will.
From Holy Place to Holy Place the soul
Sees Gates of Glory opening upward still!

THE LAST WORD.

WHEN we have said our last Good-bye,
Ah ! shall we ever meet again ?
So far apart our Thought-worlds lie !

Friend, known and loved through weal and woe,
Though knowing each the other's life,
Do we each other truly know ?

In one thing we at least are one :—
We both know what it is to love.
And though we meet in love alone,

It is enough. I cannot tell
What argument of Hope it holds :
But 'tis complete. All will be well.

Oh, clasp my hand in yours, my Friend !
Let Thought be stilled. Hold fast by Love,—
And trust it,—trust it—to the end.

"WOULD YOU WERE HERE TO-NIGHT!"

WOULD you were here to-night !
I yearn for your gentle hand :—
The touch to soothe : the smile to cheer :—
The heart to understand.

Would you were here to-night !
You *are*—to the spirit's eye !
But the senses ache to claim their share
In the dear-loved company.

Do you hear the song I sing ?
Do you read the Thought I give ?
Do you look at me as you used to look
In days that for me still live ?

Do I please you with my song ?
Is this yearning—are these tears
The proof my Spirit hears the Voice
Too fine for mortal ears ?

The music speaks for us both.
I take it as a sign,—
At once my message unto you,
And in its answer, thine.

But still the flesh is weak :
It longs for touch and sight.
Into my song I send the cry—
"Would you were here to-night !"

NOSTALGIA.

OH, earth!—on whose brow there seems naught of
regret

As each spring bids thy flowers re-awake,—
What, what have we lost in some life now forgot,
Haunting the soul, but remembered not,
That your beauty should make our hearts ache?

Oh, music!—whose soul is at one with the Word
That moved on the Face of the Deep,—
What, what have we done in some world now
unknown,
Some world that had need of this world to atone,—
That your message should fain make us weep?

Oh, Heart!—that in silence questioneth sore
The End of the Path to be trod,—
What, what have we heard in some Hope still
unguessed,
That a longing should burn like a fire in the breast,
When we turn to the Thought of God?

**"THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS WITHIN
YOU."**

"KNOW THYSELF."

ENTER. The Treasure sought, these words bestow.

Seek it not elsewhere, or near or far.

Dim, dim and faint, yet awful as a star

The light shines here whereby alone men KNOW,

No outside Force can teach Growth how to grow.

Life is Within. Here is the avatar

Who doth reveal the things which elsewhere are
Phantoms of light and shade that come and go.

Locked is the temple, yet with open gate.

Upon its altar burns the vital spark.

I enter in, and close the outward sight.

Is it all silent—void—and desolate?

Look, wait, and watch : and through the silent
dark—

Far down—there shines a Pulse of Living Light.

A MESSAGE.

YOU ask for a message. 'Tis this :
The only true Knowledge is his
 Who sees by the inward Light !
The only Reality is
 That which is hid from sight.

The Work your hand findeth to do
Is The Honour given to you
 All earthly honours above :
No Hope is too great to be true :
 And nothing is greater than Love.

TO MY LADY.

Do you ask me how I love you?
Every lover hath his say!
And the songs he sings full often
Lightly fly and flit away.

Love-song oft outlives the passion
It was writ to celebrate.
Mine—if 'twere a Song Immortal,—
Would, at least, not share that fate.

And, although it die i' the singing,
Still the Love it fain would give,
Dies not—not whilst the singer liveth,
And will all his songs outlive.

Thus it is I gain my courage :
Thus I'm bold my Word to speak,
Knowing it is strong in Spirit,
Though its Letter may be weak.

How, then, do I love you? Lifetime
Will be all too short to say.
Love is shy of definition.
But you ask,—and I obey.

This is how I love you, dearest :
Beauty makes me feel you nigh :
Waves have syllabled your Presence :
And I find you in the sky :

You are near me in the power
Of the storm wind rushing on :
And you meet me in the silence
Of the calm, when rest is won.

When the primrose stars the upland,—
When the hawthorn buds unfold,—
When the water lilies open,—
When the harvest yields its gold ;—

When the Moon is at its brightest,—
When the Noon is at its best,—
When the Eve is most resplendent,—
When the Night is starriest ;—

When the organ-notes of ocean
Breathe their diapasons grand,—
When the sovereign hill, transfigured,
Shone like Thrones of Fairyland ;—

Then I know what makes the Beauty ;
Why the Music rings so sweet ;
Yet why both—though well nigh perfect—
Lack one touch to be complete.

Love is still their Hidden secret,
Love is still their Unseen Goal :
And they only find their meaning
When Soul answers unto Soul.

In the magic voice of Music
Your True Name I seem to hear :
On all melodies Your Footsteps
Are for ever drawing near.

In all noble Thoughts I find You :
And when Life doth most expand,
Then I know You're looking at me,
Beckoning upwards with Your Hand.

In Life's Highest—my beloved !—
In Life's Best—You find Your Throne :
And You claim Life's Great Fulfilment,
Even as one who claims his own.

That is how I love You—dearest !
And when I think of God above,
Unabashed, my Thought flies upward
On the Wings it found in Love.

AT THE END OF THE DAY.

I HAVE not a single word to say
Of the many that plead for the saying :
I have not a single prayer to pray
Though life seems one long praying :

What words should I use when silence is peace
And the strife and the storm are abating ?
What prayer should I choose when all prayers cease
In the hush of a great awaiting ?

I sit and watch the setting sun.
The birds are homeward winging.
The shadows lengthen. Day is done.
The evening bells are ringing.

O ! to be one with earth and sky
And the Waters that shine and glisten !
The Right and the Wrong—let them both go by :—
Let me simply look and listen !

Lines in Pleasant Places.

(A ROUND OF RONDEAUX.)

DEDICATORY

TO MY FRIEND, HERBERT HARDINGE.

I WRITE your name upon this page. My pen
Must dedicate to you these rondeaux, writ
Of place we have visited. 'Tis fit,
Therefore, I make them yours. And now and then
It may be one will bring to you again
The scene it sings of: and whilst reading it,
Some of the happy thoughts may round you flit
Which brighten all the air about me when
I write your name.

I've missed the level of our happiest times:
Memory must paint the places spoken of,
And sing her songs to you between my rhymes.
Enough. With this apology, above
The written page, with an unwritten love,
I write your name.

LA TOUR.*

(ON THE QUAY.)

AT old La Tour some little sight remains
Of what the lake was once—when Byron wrote—
The shaded Quay seems pleasantly remote,
And dreams of days that knew not “trams” or trains.
The Chateau still its ivied moat retains.
Into its harbour, like white wings afloat,
The barques come sailing, and the anchored boat
Lips the blue water. Wild flowers tuft the lanes
At old La Tour.

The place is richer far in history,
And much less spoilt than any place near by.
Therefore—and this is well, long be it so!—
People go here and there, rush to and fro,
But let us dream on undisturbedly
At old La Tour.

* A suburb of Vevey. Beckford—the author of “Vathek”—lived some time at the Chateau.

GLION.

(WILD FLOWERS IN JUNE.)

ELYSIAN Fields around us seemed to spread.
Above, below, and stretching far and wide,
Nothing but flowers! The sunlit mountain-side
Was one great bed of blossom. But, ah! we read
With disapproving eyes the board which said
" *Defence de cueillir.*" Well, the rule's applied
To greater things, it cannot be denied.
And though we sometimes see, we seldom tread
Elysian Fields.

Pleasant the picture of that flower-bright hill!
And Memory,—thank the gods!—is civilier
Than Vaudois farmers. She will not demur,
But let us wander at our own sweet will,
And gather flowers, without a fine, in Her
Elysian Fields.

MEILLERIE.

(THE POINT OF VIEW.)

AT Meillerie we said, "we will remain!"
The sun was shining, and the scene most fair.
Idyllic surely were a sojourn there!
But when the steamboat started home again
We thought the matter over, and were fain
To own the little hostel did not wear
Promise of any luxury to spare.
And picture to yourself a day of rain
At Meillerie!

Now, mark. If you would all the picture see,
You must not in the composition be.
To see it well—stand off a little way.
Thus, if a Meillerie attract us, we—
If we be wise—do not elect to stay
At Meillerie.

CHILLON.

(IN THE WOODS.)

IN Chillon woods, high up above the shore,
I heard their voices,—yours the first of all.
To pick wild-flowers the quest. With many a call
From those below to those who climbed before,
They followed it. And soon a radiant store
Of grasses, leaves and flowers—a coronal
Of Spring, all rich with scent ambrosial,—
You brought to me, who climb, alas! no more
In Chillon woods.

There's something more than eyesight in the eye.
The next Spring came, and you were far away.
Put these two facts together, and then say,—
With fitting turn of verbal pleasantry,—
How 'twas the wild flowers were so poor that May
In Chillon woods.

CHILLON.

(THE CASTLE OF.)

WE know it well—in photograph and print !
We know it well—in drawing and in verse !
Coloured or plain—for better or for worse !
Each shop for miles around it shows some hint
Of omnipresent Chillon, till we stint
The very name of joy. Let us asperse
That popularity which gives the curse
To Beauty of its own commercial tint.
We know it well !

And yet how perfect is the scene ! No art
Could make the picture better : for each part
Leads to the whole. We might, day after day,
Live near it,—love it,—till we learnt by heart
Its every line, and yet scarce dare to say
“ We know it well.”

MARSEILLES.

(**EN ROUTE FOR THE RIVIERA.**)

FROM snow to flowers, from winter into spring !
Bleak March at Montreux, at Marseilles bright May !
We seemed to rush to summer in a day.
Geneva stabbed us with its wintry sting.
Our muffled furs still left us shivering.—
And at Marseilles we flung our furs away,
Gave welcome to the sun's reviving ray,
And thanked the gods for such a journeying
From snow to flowers.

Festas come thus, without much heralding.
One seldom can repeat so good a thing.
And may be, it is well that, yea or nay,
When flowers are gone and snow seems come to stay,
We cannot always at the wish take wing
From snow to flowers.

THE RIVIERA.

(THE OLD-WORLD TOWNS.)

THEY lie asleep beside the purple sea,
Those old-world towns along that sunny coast :
So massive, rivetted, they seem almost
One with the rocks they crown. Nooks, too, there be
Where, 'neath the pines, one dreams of Thessaly.
Its Golden Age has not been wholly lost,
Nor have its gods yet given up the ghost.
In valleys screened by pine and cistus tree,
They lie asleep.

Fair is the name of that fair Littoral.
Bright thoughts it brings to us. And still we know
That though perhaps we seldom speak of all
The pleasant memories which that name can show,
Deep in our hearts—to answer if we call,—
They lie asleep.

THE ESTERELS.

"To see White Presences upon the hills."

THE Esterels against the sunset's gold
Are massed in layers of purple. Silver bright
The crescent moon is magnet to the light.
Those porphyry hills were sacred once of old
To Artemis. And as deep shadows fold
The lovely scene, one feels how much the sight
Is focussed by the soul. To see aright
Such views as this, some Artemis must hold
Our Esterels.

Nature is plastic, and for those who will
The old enchantments live in wood and hill.
Beauty and Mystery never from us pass.
And their mute consecration hallows still
All places such—(and all can find them!)—as
The Esterels.

CANNES.

(AFTERNOON TEA.)

AT Rumpelmeyer's we scrambled for our tea.
English, as she is spoke by folk who drop
Their final *g*'s, resounded through the shop.
Outside—(the mistral blowing fresh and free!)—
Crowds of fair ladies sat, and seemed to be
Reaping of colds and scandals goodly crop,
Then, at the last, as Pleasure's Crown and Top,
They'd say—"Meet us to-morrow—" (ecstasy!)
"At Rumpelmeyer's."

The mirth of smart folk makes a small sad tune.
Such take their country with them, and abide
Within its boundaries—nor are these wide!
Which wholesome truths may be exemplified
In the Cannes "Season," any afternoon
At Rumpelmeyer's.

NICE.

(MI-CARÊME).

BLUE sea,—blue sky : white balconies and blinds :—
Shops, people, carriages, palmtrees and flowers !
Of all good worlds the very best is ours.
Only, do not remember ! Let our minds
Be “ positive ” to memories of all kinds.
Live in the sunshine, and avoid the showers.
Man cannot better cultivate his powers
Than on a Boulevard,—happy if he finds
Blue sea,—blue sky.

Forget, and you'll keep young. Nice has a Past
Which makes one old to think of. But *n'importe !*
Who thinks thereof ? Not Nice herself ! Her *forte*
Is Carnival and Mi-Carême ! Too fast
The Fête days pass. Enjoy them whilst they last—
Blue sea,—blue sky !

MONACO.

(IN THE GARDENS.)

AT Monaco more than the Condamine
Divides you from the Palace of Roulette.
It seems another world. The place dreams yet
Of Tyrian Hercules. The Goddess Queen
Whose name still lives in Eze* has never been
Wholly forgot. Strange unknown memories set
Their signature upon the soil. We get
Clairvoyant of the Past in many a scene
At Monaco.

And "deeply, darkly, beautifully blue,"
Th' historic sea spreads out before our eyes :
And that nostalgia which ofttimes will rise
For something lost—will it be found anew?—
Makes us unhappy and most happy, too,
At Monaco.

* Isis.

MONTE CARLO.

(THE CASINO.)

"FAITES votre jeu!" I made me mine, and lost!
I gave the twenty francs as Fortune's Fee.
My games of Chance are always Certainty.
So they lack point. And point there lacked, almost,
To dulness in the scene. That's naught to boast!
The dulness was my own. But "Play" to me
Is a Shut Door: Inside's the place to see.
Temptation's slight if you count up the cost.
"Faites votre jeu!"

But have we not our own Green Baize and Wheel?
'Tis easy work to play the Joseph when
The Wife of Potiphar has scant appeal.
Yet let us own—beneath confession's seal—
'Tis but a question of the What—and then,
"Faites votre jeu!"

MENTONE.

(A MORNING WALK.)

THROUGH olive woods we strolled that happy day
—Do you remember?—When . . . Nay! there's no
“when”!

The walk was one long bright adventure then,
But yields the chronicler no part to play.
A walk. That's all. There's nothing more to say.

We wandered on above a mountain glen:
In lemon-gardens up the hill some men
Were singing: and we saw the turquoise Bay
Through olive woods.

Again I listen, loiter, laugh, and look!
A gala morning! But when brought to book
It makes a legend scarcely worth a line.
Yet, among pictures which in Memory shine,
Few are more vivid than that walk we took
Through olive woods.

MENTONE.

(A MOONLIGHT NIGHT.)

It shines for all—that moonbeam on the sea.
I at Mentone, you at Nice, behold
Each his own path of rippling molten gold.
But yours is all your own, and mine to me
Is wholly mine. Could our Thoughts flee
Over that luminous track they would not fold
Their wings to Meeting till the waves had rolled
To yon horizon. Fact or phantasy—
It shines for all.

The beam is where you see it,—radiates
From one point truly, but the radius waits
Upon our eyes, goes with us as we go.
A parable is written on that glow.
But few, I think, accept the lesson, though
It shines for all.

HENLEY.

(MARSH MILLS.)

THE Silver Thames demands a passing sigh.
The flowers once held the river banks their own.
It's O ! for tranquil summer days now flown,
When house-boats were an unknown quantity !
But stay ! a hint of Anno Domini
Haunts all such sighs. They're better left alone.
And sighing should be utterly unknown
When, as to-day, the blue skies glorify
The Silver Thames.

Now dip your oar, and put the boat along.
'Twere hard to picture beauty more complete.
Sighing, indeed ! what folly ! smiles and song,—
Smiles that are true, and singing that is sweet—
These are the things wherewith to greet
The Silver Thames.

HENLEY.

("THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES.")

LET Silence speak. Your heart will understand.
Mine is too full for words. What words, indeed,
Are needed? In one simple phrase we read
The whole tale told,—My Childhood's Home. Our
hand
May hold the Present, and our souls expand
With impulses of Growth, and Hopes that lead
Onward and upward! Yet such scenes will plead
With voice no other scenes can e'er command.
Let Silence speak.

"The old familiar faces,"—how beloved!
With brighter, fuller meanings, look at us.
Let not such feeling be in aught reproved.
What Voices may not come, what Force be moved,
If we but hush our Souls, and listening thus,
Let Silence speak!

BRIGHTON.

(ON "THE FRONT.")

ALONG "the Front" at Brighton, side by side,
When suns were hot, and (sometimes!) winds were
cold,

Observant, and observed, we oft have strolled.
The Classes and the Masses both have tried
To mould the place. Its sympathies are wide.

And when its Claude-like sunsets flood with gold,
Its western skies, its beauties too, I hold,
Are not a few, nor undiversified,

Along "the Front."

Our English Nice! a place to love or hate!
We love you,—and we don't know how or why.

Perhaps you do not rise to Poetry
Of living, but if Prose, at any rate
You're pleasant reading for a tête-à-tête,
Along "the Front."

RAMSGATE.

(DAYS OF LEISURE.)

GREY Winter days, you gave us pleasant hours.
A scent of Autumn lingered in the air.
On the cliff-ledges, here and there,
Valerian showed a few belated flowers,
And red-leafed briars starred the bearded bowers
Of clematis. The scene was soft and fair
With greys of every hue, and seemed to wear
That sense of Home with which our England dowers
Grey Winter Days.

The Harbour pool, all day a busy scene :
The coloured lights at night : the strip of green
Fronting our rooms, where when the sun was bright
We watched the ships go by and out of sight !
Seldom, I think, have ever happier been
Grey Winter Days.

HASTINGS.

"Ancient streets of Hastings Town."

OLD Hastings Town, you've given us happy days,
'Neath August sun and grey December cloud.
Excursion trains have not yet disendowed
Your streets of charm. Bank-Holiday's worst phase
Tries its bad best. But your old-fashioned ways
Tempt not its votaries from the beach-bound crowd.
You're still yourself: and it must be allowed
That now-a-days that's no mean sort of praise,
Old Hastings Town.

The black wood-houses, clustered 'neath the cliff,
We watch with fond and jealous eyes each year,
Lest iron-brained Improvement, drawing near,
Should pluck them down. For if it did,—ah, if!—
Why, then, for us Farewell, O! pleasant, dear,
Old Hastings Town!

BOURNEMOUTH.

(BRANKSOME CHINE.)

OF Branksome Chine there lives to me and you
A pleasant picture : Fir woods, dim and cool :
Lilies that whiten many a glassy pool :
A narrow gorge that opens into view
Sand-cliffs of amber and a sea of blue.
A place that's evergreen at heart of Yule !
The storm-wind seems its rage to tame and school,
Passing o'er sheltered nook and avenue
Of Branksome Chine.

The *Genius loci* surely mourns in dule
The day when first the Char-à-bancs it knew.
Earth's fairest scenes—says one*—are as a rule
“Known but by few.” One wishes that were true
(Granting that we ourselves select that Few !)
Of Branksome Chine !

* Ruskin.

CHRISTCHURCH.

(ON THE BRIDGE.)

A SOUND of bells, and waters whispering
Through pasture-meadows, marsh, and dunes of
sand,
Lives in the name. Pleasant it is to stand
On the old bridge, and watch the weed-beds swing
I' the stream,—the swallow dip its wing,—
Just as ofttimes, when this was Abbey-land,
Maybe a Monk has stood, missal in hand,
What time the evening air, as now, did bring
The sound of bells.

Beautiful minster! you have had your day.
The message now hath struck another note.
The Spirit lasts, the Form must fall away.
The Godward thought, for ever and for aye,
Across the silence of the Ages floats,—
Like sound of bells.

CLOVELLY.

(COURT HILL.)

A "WESTWARD HO!" the whole place seems to say.

He caught its life, and his was tinged thereby

Whose name is linked with that old sailor-cry.

The spirit of its great heroic day

Haunts all this coast. Lie here, and look away

To open sea. I watch with dimming eye

That steamer outward-bound. The sunset sky

Flashes its message to our Northern grey,—

A "Westward ho!"

"The thunder of the long Atlantic Swell"

Comes up across the land. Purple and brown

The oak-woods seem asleep in yonder dell.

O, Look!—The sun is sinking! It goes down

Into the Ocean. Grand! O, day—Farewell!

And Westward Ho!

CLOVELLY.

(THE STREET.)

CLOVELLY Street! We see a bright vignette,—
Framed all in fuschias, ferns, and apple boughs,—
Of boats at anchor in the Pool, of house
Clambering on house with stair and parapet,
And a stone Quay festooned with bronze-hued net.
Where'er the hillside vantage-coign allows
The gardens blossom and the wild-briar grows.
Summer in one great garland seems to set
Clovelly Street.

But Winter has a sterner tale to tell.
There's sorrow on the sea. The place knows well
The moaning of the Bar. It wipes away
Its tears, and laughs like any child at play.
Thus Tears and Smiles both touch with Celtic spell
Clovelly Street.

GORLESTON.

(ON A DRAWING OF THE HARBOUR PIER.)

OF Gorleston Pier my pen would follow suit
Of pencil, but it has even less of skill :
And It had less of skill than I of will
To put the scene on record. I am mute.
But we need not the work of brush or "lute"
(To use poetic phrase) our minds to fill
With many pictures, bright and life-like still,
With every detail, perfect past dispute,
Of Gorleston Pier.

.

. . An August morning! See, how bright the sky!
The air as fresh as wine and clear as glass!
The fishing-boats go slowly sailing by.
Let us lie here. The morning soon will pass! . . .
It passes with the passing memory
Of Gorleston Pier.

LOWESTOFT.

(BATTERY GREEN.)

ON Battery Green we sat at eventide.

A bit of open ground where, as you stand,

You look to sea across a stretch of sand.

Old-fashioned red-brick houses skirt one side,

The seats about are seldom occupied,

Save when the children take the place in hand,

"Old Salts" talk o'er the business of the land,

Or lovers find a sunset glorified

On Battery Green.

It has a beauty hard to state : a grace

Born of Romance but wed to Commonplace.

The union is a rare one, but is strong.

And for us both I fancy—am I wrong?

Remembrance oft will turn a loving face

On Battery Green.

LOWESTOFT.

Days "Whereon it is enough for me
Not to be doing but to be."

From day to day we grew to love it more :—
The pretty garden giving on the Green,—
The wharves beyond, where masts and sails are seen
Above the roofs,—the long broad stretch of shore
With lines of poles and nets. The whole scene wore
A growing charm. And 'thwart the sandy dene,
With strips of marsh and reedy pools between,
The calm sea was by sunny skies roofed o'er
From day to day.

Bright memorable days of reverie !
More sense of bright attainment such do give
Than all the days of work. And on them, we—
Choosing the better part—sit quietly
At Nature's feet, and gain new life to live
From day to day.

SOUTHWOLD.

(A DRIVE.)

"To Southwold drive!" The day gave promise good.
Harvest was over. As we passed along,
The children, with the old East Anglian song,
Ran shouting "Largess!" Meadow, field, and wood,
Long lines of country stretching far, all stood
Suffused with that broad light, who lives among
Wide moors or pasture-lands knows well. Is't
wrong
To wish Time back?—or that to-day we could
To Southwold drive?

Well, Memory's full of blessing or of ban.
No mere brain-pictures hers. No, she can give
A recreating force which doth outlive
The things remembered—*they* are fugitive.
And so to-day—at will—in thought we *can*
To Southwold drive.

WHITBY.

(LOOKING DOWN THE RIVER.)

It holds its own, in even these railroad days.
England no more romantic spot can show.
The ruined shrine watches the town below :
And with its tombs around it, seems to gaze
To open sea. And as these sunset rays
Enrich the scene with topaz-coloured glow,
So sunset memories of the Long Ago
Give it that pathos which, in unseen ways,
It holds its own.

Poet and painter here have work to hand.
And yet it asks no Art to understand
A scene so fair. The picture meets the eye,
Perfect in most ideal reality.
Nor needs it Bard to give it poetry :
It holds its own.

CAMBRIDGE.

(REVISITED.)

"This is the place—" you stop me with a smile.
Thank you! Else had you found me garrulous.
Happy the man who, facing lost youth thus,
Finds in a friend the link to reconcile
The Past and Present in a cheerier style
Than with a sigh. I think this place to us
Has aspects twain. For each one sees *plus*
Himself. 'T were rash should either say meanwhile
" *This* is the place."

Man certainly approximates the ghost
When he revisits college : and his eyes
Are apt to—well, no matter ! 'Tis almost
A sin to slip such chance to memorise :
Is 't virtue too ? Then for its exercise
This is the place !

NORWICH.

(FROM MOUSEHOLD* HILL.)

The sun has set. From Mousehold Hill we see
The golden glory deepen into rose.
Darker the shadow o'er the city grows.
The bells are ringing. Nay-nay : let me be !
Their major rings a minor unto me.
Under the hill-side, see, the river flows :
And from the Water Gate, hard by the Close,
The ferry-boat goes over silently.
The sun has set.

Ah ! most pathetic of all useless woe,
Tritest of sorrows which the world doth know,
Foolish to others, but to us so sore,—
That wild regret for "days that are no more."
What happy days I had here long ago !
The sun has set.

* Pronounced *Mussle*.

ENVOY.

From place to place we've wandered in these rhymes,
Not far afield, nor with adventurous wings.
Places well known, and everyday-like things
Have moved my unambitious verse. Sometimes
I fain had sung of hours whose passing chimes
Struck deeper music. But Remembrance sings
Of these: nor need they other song. Such strings
As I can sound suit Thought which skims, not climbs
From place to place.

Yet bear with one Thought deeper than the rest:—
The wish—at this our pictured journey's end—
That as in it we were together—Friend,—
So still together, and in Friendship blest,
Through Other Journey we may onward wend
From Place to Place.



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